ESSAYS

ON THE

IMPORTANT TRUTHS

CONTAINED IN THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES;

Humbly propos'd to the conſideration of all,

BUT

Deſigned principally for the INSTRUCTION of

YOUTH

In Grammar-Schools.

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This is Life eternal to know thee the only true GOD, *and* JESUS CHRIST *whom thou haſt ſent.*

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ESSAYS

THE

CONTENTS.

Page

ESSAY I. *On the nature of GOD,* - 1

ESSAY II. *On the attributes of GOD.* - 3

ESSAY III. *On the nature of man, his original formation and ſtate.* - - - - - 5

ESSAY IV. *On the fall of man, and the conſequences of it, in the firſt ages of the world.* 8

ESSAY V. *On the preſent corrupted ſtate of man.* - - - - - - - 11

ESSAY VI. *On our condition in regard to GOD in a ſtate of nature.* - - - 13

ESSAY VII. *On man's redemption promiſed, and compleated by* JESUS CHRIST. - - 15

ESSAY VIII. *On the nature of* CHRIST, *that he is both GOD and Man.* - - 22

ESSAY IX. *On the means whereby* CHRIST *compleated our redemption.* - - 27

ESSAY X. *On the relation* CHRIST *bears to us, as king, prieſt, and prophet.* - - 31

ESSAY XI. *On the office of the Holy Ghoſt.* 34

ESSAY XII. *On the inſtituted conditions of obtaining a part in this redemption.* - 37

ESSAY

CONTENTS.

Page

ESSAY XIII. *On the duties incumbent on those who are thus redeemed.* - - 41

ESSAY XIV. *On the ſuperior excellence of the chriſtian over heathen morality.* - - 47

ESSAY XV. *On the means of grace.* - - 53

ESSAY XVI. *On the promiſes of GOD to chriſtian obedience, and the puniſhments denounced on impenitence.* - - - 59

ESSAY XVII. *On the great privileges of a chriſtian.* - - - - - 63

ESSAY XVIII. *On the holy ſcriptures.* - 67

CONCLUSION. - - - - 73

ADVERTISEMENT.

READER,

BISHOP *GASTREL*'s CHRISTIAN INSTITUTES ſeemed to me ſo excellent a book, and ſo admirably calculated to teach the truth, as it is in JESUS, that I have often wiſhed it was more generally read, and more univerſally known. I thought that ſelecting the fundamentals of our holy religion, according to the plan of that pious author, and treating of them under ſeveral heads, in the words of ſcripture, as much as poſſible, might be uſeful to all; and eſpecially be a preſervative to youth in theſe times of infidelity, and great inattention to the ſacred oracles. This, it was imagined, would exhibit the *trueſt* body of *ſound divinity*, and prevent men being carried away with *every wind of doctrine:* and in particular ſecure *young* perſons from the fatal contagion of error, as well as lay the foundation for farther enquiry into the articles of our moſt holy faith in the future part of their lives.

If the following eſſays containing an abſtract of chriſtian doctrine and duty ſhould contribute

to the advancement of chriſtian knowledge and practice, the compiler of them will rejoice that he hath been in any meaſure inſtrumental to the increaſe of the true kingdom of *Chriſt*, in the hearts and affections of men.

The

The MASTER *to his* SCHOLARS.

MY DEAR BOYS,

YOU are ſent to me for inſtruction. As a chriſtian ſchool-maſter I do not think that the *whole* of my duty conſiſts in inſtructing you in *claſſical learning*, and therefore cannot diſcharge my own conſcience, or act up to the great truſt committed to me, without diligently informing you of the *momentous truths of our holy religion*, and endeavouring to poſſeſs your tender minds with a ſpirit of piety, and a ſenſe of the duty you owe to GOD, your neighbour, and yourſelves.———The claſſic authors you read in ſchool come recommended to the ingenious ſcholar by every ornament, which purity of language, ſtrength of genius, and perfection of art can beſtow. But at the ſame time they are fraught with the *groſſeſt abſurdities* in religion, and convey either a moſt *corrupted*, or at beſt a very *imperfect* ſyſtem of morality. It is my duty therefore to warn you, and your's to take heed that you do not, thro' too great an admiration of them, adopt their falſe principles, and together with the elegance of their ſtile imbibe their errors and abſurdities. The beſt way to be ſecured from any wrong biaſs in this reſpect, is to be well grounded in the Truths of *Chriſtianity*. *Theſe* will lead you to ſee and pity the ignorance even of the greateſt maſters of learning in the moſt poliſh'd age of the heathen world; and convince you that *human reaſon, un-*

aſſiſted by revelation, is inſufficient to lead mankind into the true knowledge of GOD and of themſelves, or to diſcover the chief good and great end of man. The *revelation of God* contained in the ſacred books of ſcripture will convey to your minds ſuch *real* and *important* truths, as, if duly attended to, will, with the divine bleſſing, baffle all the efforts of infidelity: will ſettle in your minds ſuch principles as will tend to produce an active obedience to the will of GOD: and promote in you a grateful ſenſe of the advantage of being Chriſtians.——To inform your minds in this *eſſential* reſpect, and to induce you to read the ſcriptures of truth is the purport of the following eſſays, which I beg you ſeriouſly and attentively to peruſe: humbly praying to GOD, that together with the acquiſition of human knowledge, he may make you *wiſe unto ſalvation*, and that you may "daily increaſe in his holy ſpirit "more and more 'till you come to his everlaſt-"ing kingdom."

THE

THE INTRODUCTION.

THE foundation of all true religion muſt be laid in a right knowledge of GOD. Before we can pray to GOD as we ought, ſubmit to be taught by him, depend on his goodneſs, or rely on his truth, we muſt be convinced not only that [a] HE IS, but likewiſe *that he is a rewarder of thoſe that diligently ſeek him*; and that he is moſt wiſe, powerful, true, juſt and holy. Now the word of GOD expreſsly aſſerts that [b] *the world by wiſdom knew not God:* and the caſe of thoſe nations, who had in a great meaſure loſt the knowledge of the true GOD, originally imparted to the firſt parents of mankind, may ſhew us, that man could not attain this knowledge of GOD from himſelf or from his own reaſon. Amidſt all their improvements in philoſophy, their admired progreſs in every human ſcience, the firſt truths of religion were totally hid from them: for having adopted falſe principles, their reaſonings from them, tho' confeſſedly juſt, led them to a ſtill greater diſtance from the truth. Hence we are not ſurpriſed to find, after all their reſearches on this ſubject, even at [c] ATHENS the ſeat of learning, an altar inſcribed—TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

The ſcriptures alone contain the truth, as they alone contain the revelation of GOD to man upon

on this important ſubject. The nature and attributes of GOD could only be made known to man by GOD himſelf, as they are confeſſedly beyond the line of human underſtanding: and all that is neceſſary for us to be acquainted with concerning them was originally vouchſafed to man, and was by immediate inſpiration recorded in GOD's word.

As the ſcriptures then are the fountain of knowledge in this reſpect; as from them are learnt the nature and attributes of GOD, the original formation of man, his fall through ſin, his redemption by grace, the means of ſecuring an intereſt in this redemption, and the duties incumbent on the redeemed of the LORD; ſo the following eſſays are built on the ſcriptures alone as their ground work. Nothing is therein wilfully aſſerted, which is not to be proved from thence: and they are humbly intended to promote the cauſe of our common chriſtianity, and to exhibit ſuch a ſyſtem of faith and practice as is taught us in the word of GOD, and incumbent on every one, who calls himſelf a Chriſtian, to receive.

ESSAY

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[a] *Heb.* xi. 6. [b] 1 *Cor.* i. 20, 21. [c] *Acts* xvii. 23.

ESSAY I.

On the Nature of GOD.

IT is revealed to us in ſcripture, that there is but [a]one GOD,—that [b]He is a *Spirit*, and conſequently [c]inviſible to us. Yet notwithſtanding the unity of the divine nature, the ſame ſcripture declares in general a [d]plurality in the divine eſſence, and in particular confines that plurality to [e]THREE, and plainly propoſes to our faith the [f]FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST, as the ſole object of divine worſhip. ——However incomprehenſible the *manner* of the divine exiſtence thus deſcribed may be to human thought, yet as we have undoubted evidence that the *divine Spirit* is the author of theſe revelations, and as He cannot poſſibly contradict himſelf, we ought to conclude, that any difficulty we find in comprehending the nature of GOD thus revealed to us ariſes *ſolely* from the weakneſs of our finite capacities. [g]*Can we by ſearching find out God? Can we find out the Almighty to perfection?* [h]*Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, it is high, we cannot attain unto it.*

Our duty in this reſpect, as well as the higheſt perfection of human reaſon, is to receive and humbly believe what GOD hath thought fit to reveal concerning himſelf: and to ſearch into the divine nature no farther than GOD hath revealed himſelf to us. It behoves us to acknowledge and worſhip no other but this ONE GOD, cha-

characterized as FATHER, SON AND HOLY GHOST: to ſerve him with a true and ſpiritual worſhip: "to love the LORD our GOD, "with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and "with all our ſtrength, and to ſerve him truly "all the days of our life."

ESSAY

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[a] *Deut.* vi. 4. *Hear, O Iſrael, the Lord our God is* ONE *Lord.* See likewiſe *Deut.* iv. 35. [b] *John* iv. 24.

[c] *Heb.* xi. 27. 1 *Tim.* vi. 16. *John* i. 18.—v. 37.

[d] The plurality in the divine eſſence evidently appears from the *plural* noun uſed in ſcripture for the one JEHOVAH, and generally connected with that incommunicable name. It is the firſt deſcriptive name of GOD mentioned in the bible: which, as it is undoubtedly plural, the Divine Spirit would not have uſed, had there not been a plurality of perſons in the divine eſſence, unleſs we can ſuppoſe it was his intention to lead us into error.

[e] *Numb.* vi. 24, 25, 26. *The* LORD *bleſs thee and keep thee: the* LORD *make his face to ſhine upon thee and be gracious unto thee: the* LORD *lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.* *Iſ.* vi. 3. compared with *Rev.* iv. 8.

[f] *Mat.* xxviii. 19. *Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the* NAME *of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* 2 Cor. xiii. 14. 1 *John* v. 7.

[g] *Job* xi. 7. [h] *Pſ.* cxxxix. 6.

ESSAY II.

On the attributes of GOD.

IT is revealed to us in ſcripture, that GOD is [a] *eternal* and unchangeable, and that [b] he is *preſent* in all places, and knows all things. Nothing is hid from his ſight. [c] Our moſt ſecret thoughts lie open to his view, as well as our public actions, and he ſees every imagination of our hearts. Moreover we are aſſured that GOD is infinite in [d] *wiſdom*, ſo as to diſpoſe all things as is moſt right and fit:——infinite in [e] *power*, ſo as to be able to do all things;——infinite in [f] *goodneſs*, ſo as to love all men;——infinite in [g] *mercy*, ſo as to be willing that all ſhould come to the knowledge of the truth, and be ſaved;——infinite in [h] *juſtice*, ſo as to judge and reward all men according to their works;------infinite in [i] *truth*, as being truth itſelf, and faithful in every thing he hath promiſed;—and infinite in [k] *holineſs*, as being abſolutely holy in his own nature, and delighting in thoſe that are *pure in heart*, and *keep themſelves unſpotted from the world.*

It is our duty to adore the perfections of the divine nature; to have a conſtant guard over our thoughts, words and actions, as knowing that GOD is preſent with us in all places and at all times; to ſubmit to his wiſdom, who orders all things as is moſt right and beſt for us; to magnify his power, who is able to perform all things; to rely on his goodneſs, who loveth us with the

affection of a father; to fear his juſtice; to depend on his truth and faithfulneſs; and to imitate, as far as human frailty will permit, his holineſs, who requires us *to be holy as he is holy*, and pure in all our life and converſation.

ESSAY

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[a] *Iſ.* xliii. 13. *Pſ.* cii. 25, 26, 27. *Mal.* iii. 6.
[b] *Pſ.* cxxxix. 2—10. *Prov.* xv. 3.
[c] *Iſ.* lxvi. 18. *Heb.* iv. 13.
[d] *Job.* xxxviii. 36. 1 *Tim.* i. 17.
[e] *Pſ.* lxii. 11. *Iſ.* xxvi. 4.
[f] *Pſ.* cxxxvi. 1 *John* iv. 8. 9, 10. *Jam.* i. 17.
[g] 1 *Tim.* ii. 4, 5, 6. [h] *Jer.* ix. 24. *Acts* xvii. 31.
[i] *Num.* xxiii. 19. *Matt.* xxiv. 35. *Heb.* x. 23. *Rev.* xv. 3.
[k] *Levit.* xix. 2. *Pſ.* cxlv. 17. *Iſ.* xliii. 14, 15.

ESSAY III.

On the nature of man, his original formation and ſtate.

NEXT to the true knowledge of GOD, the knowledge of ourſelves is neceſſary. If we are ignorant of what we are compounded, what abilities we have to ſerve GOD, what relation we ſtand in to him, and for what ends we were ſent into the world, we muſt of courſe be ignorant of the duty we owe to GOD our Creator, Preſerver and Redeemer.-----Now this knowledge we can only attain from the revelation of GOD; becauſe He, that created, formed, redeemed and daily preſerves us, can alone inform us of our relation to him, of the abilities he has endued us with, and the great ends he had in creating, preſerving and redeeming us.

An enquiry then from ſcripture into the original ſtate of man what it originally was, and what it is at preſent, whether it has been alter'd, and by what means, muſt ever be proper and uſeful.

As to the original formation and ſtate of man, we are informed in ſcripture that he was [a] *created by God in his own image*;----that he is compoſed of two parts, [b] *a body formed out of the duſt of the ground*, and a *ſpirit breath'd* into him immediately from GOD, and ſo of an immaterial and immortal nature.----Hence too we learn that [c] man was intended for ſociety: male and female having

having been alike created by God, [d]and joined together in the ſtricteſt bond of marriage. Man was undoubtedly created in ſuch perfection of underſtanding as to be capable of being informed by his creator: and the improvement he made from this information appears from his [e]*giving names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beaſt of the field.* He was endued likewiſe with great power, as having [f]*dominion* given him by God *over every living thing that moved on the earth:* and the uprightneſs of all his faculties appears from his being made in the image of God. The man thus holily and [g]uprightly formed, [h]was placed in a delightful garden planted by God himſelf: yet ſo plac'd as to be in a ſtate of trial and probation. [i]The *tree of the knowledge of good and evil* he was *not to eat of:* if he diſobeyed and did eat of it, the puniſhment was, *Thou ſhalt ſurely die.*

This is the only account of man's original ſtate. As man was compounded of two parts, a ſoul and a body intimately united, we may learn that the duties incumbent on him muſt neceſſarily have been twofold, referring to each of his conſtituent parts. He was not all ſpirit, and therefore his obedience could not be purely ſpiritual: he conſiſted of a ſoul as well as a body, therefore the injunctions to be given could not be merely carnal. As man's outward ſenſes were the means of applying to his underſtanding, ſo what God enjoined, and what man was to obſerve were outward ordinances in reference to, and as ſigns of ſpiritual graces. Moreover in this account of man's original ſtate we do not find

find any mention of a law of nature acting independently of the information of God, but we see man immediately after his creation receiving instruction and laws from his almighty creator. And we may observe too, that the advantages of society were originally intended by God and enjoyed by man; not left to be then attended to, when rapine, violence and bloodshed led men to see and embrace them.

Hence let us learn to extol the divine goodness and wisdom, which originally intended us for happiness, had not man in his state of trial rebelliously disobeyed the divine command.

ESSAY

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[a] *Gen.* i. 27.
[b] *Gen.* ii. 7. *Prov.* xx. 27. *Job* xxxii. 8.
[c] *Gen.* ii. 18. [d] *Gen.* ii. 22, 23, 24.
[e] *Gen.* ii. 19, 20. [f] *Gen.* i. 28. [g] *Ec.* vii. 29.
[h] *Gen.* ii. 8, 9, and on. [i] *Gen.* ii. 17.

ESSAY IV.

On the fall of man, and the conſequences of it, in the firſt ages of the world.

HOW long man continued in the ſtate of innocence he was created in we know not. However we have a ſtriking account in ſcripture of his fall, and the wretched conſequences of it. That *old Serpent* called the *devil* or *Satan* in the form of an [a] animal ſerpent deceived our firſt parents by tempting *Eve* the weaker veſſel to diſobey the divine command. She hearkning to his crafty inſinuations, and taking upon herſelf to determine concerning GOD's prohibition from her own ſenſes and reaſon, *took of the fruit of the* forbidden *tree and did eat, and gave alſo unto her huſband with her and he did eat.*

The conſequences of their diſobedience immediate appeared. [b] *Their eyes were opened*, not to ſee that they were as Gods, as the devil had flattered them, but to know themſelves *naked*, deſtitute of the divine favour, and ſubject to GOD's wrath. The ſenſe of ſin appeared in their guilty faces, when they [c] hid *themſelves from the preſence of the* LORD GOD: and they ſoon perceived the miſery of their fallen ſtate by the *curſe* pronounced upon themſelves, and upon the earth for their ſakes.----Thus the firſt Parents of mankind fell from their innocence; and hereby becoming rebels againſt GOD and his authority they forfeited the happineſs deſigned for them; and [d] were driven

ven out from that earthly paradiſe wherein God himſelf had plac'd them.

The human nature thus corrupted by tranſgreſſion ſoon diſcovered it's loſs of the divine image, when [e] *Cain* ſhed the innocent *blood of his brother Abel*, becauſe he was more *righteous* than himſelf. And after the ſucceſſion of about ten generations, [f] God *ſaw the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually, and it repented the* Lord *that he had made man on the earth; and it grieved him at his heart.* And in order to give all future ages a laſting example of his juſtice in puniſhing obdurate and irreclaimable ſinners, and of his goodneſs in preſerving the virtuous and godly, [g] he ſent *a deluge of waters, which deſtroyed every living ſubſtance which was upon the face of the ground both man and cattle and the creeping things, and the fowls of the heaven:* and only *eight perſons*, Noah and his family, who had preſerved themſelves innocent in the general depravity, *and the creatures that were in the ark with him remained alive.*

But the original corruption was ſo deeply rooted in the human heart that even this ſurprizing judgment could not keep the children of men in obedience. The deſcendents of this ſame *Noah*, who had been ſo wonderfully preſerved, ſoon forſook the Lord their God; and were preparing to build a [h] *city and a tower, whoſe top* [might reach] *to heaven*; deſigned perhaps as a temple to ſome object of falſe worſhip; had not God in wiſdom miraculouſly interpoſed, and *ſcattered*

tered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth.

From this hiſtory we ought to reflect on the great folly and ingratitude of our firſt parents in thus rebelling againſt their creator, and diſobeying his will. And hence we may learn the great wickedneſs of ſetting up our own imaginations againſt the divine commands. Whatever God commands us to do or abſtain from is abſolutely to be ſubmitted to, how diſagreeable ſoever it may be to our inclinations, or how much ſoever our own reaſon may be unable to ſee the propriety of the command or inhibition. Our happineſs depends on our ſubmiſſion to God's will, and our miſery both here and hereafter muſt neceſſarily be the conſequence of our oppoſition to God and his commands.

ESSAY

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[a] *Gen.* iii. 1—6.
[b] *Gen.* iii. 7.
[c] *Gen.* iii 8—19.
[d] *Gen.* iii. 24.
[e] *Gen.* iv. 3, 4, 5, 8. 1 *John* iii. 12.
[f] *Gen.* vi. 5, 6, 12, 13.
[g] *Gen.* vii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 23.
[h] *Gen.* xi. 1—9.

ESSAY V.

On the preſent corrupted ſtate of man.

THE ſcripture deſcribes the miſery of the preſent fallen ſtate of man in the following terms.—In conſequence of the original tranſgreſſion he is ſubject to [a]*death*, and even whilſt he lives is liable to trouble, pain, and ſickneſs, and many other frailties. In reſpect of his mind he is repreſented as miſerably [b] ignorant in the things of GOD; and we are aſſured that all the [c]wiſdom and knowledge he has by nature is *fooliſhneſs with* GOD: that he is [d] *blind* in regard to ſpiritual things and ſo weak in this reſpect, that he is not [e] *ſufficient of himſelf to think any thing as of himſelf:* and farther that he is [f] involved in ſin, the ſin of his firſt parents, and in conſequence of that in actual ſin: that he hath [g] *gone aſtray like a ſheep that is loſt:* "That he has "done ſo many things he ought not to do, and "left undone ſo many he ought to have done, "that he muſt confeſs himſelf a miſerable ſin-"ner."

This condition of our fallen nature ought to teach us a truly ſerious humility of ſoul. How can we do otherwiſe than in deep ſorrow of ſpirit confeſs our ſins to Almighty GOD, and own to him that [h] *in us dwelleth no good thing.* Eſpecially when we all know by fatal experience the truth of this deſcription of natural corruption given by the ſpirit of GOD. We know that [i] *in many things*

we offend all: We know, if we will acknowledge it, our vileneſs, miſery and frailty, the corruption of our hearts, and our natural averſion to the things of God. Therefore let us with the humble *publican* in great humility of heart cry out, [k] *God be merciful to us ſinners.*

ESSAY

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[a] *Gen.* ii. 17. *Thou ſhalt ſurely die.* Romans vi. 23. *The wages of ſin is death.* See *Rom.* v. 12. *Heb.* ix. 27. 1 *Cor.* xv. 22. *Job* xiv. 10, 11, 12.

[b] *Iſ.* lix. 10. *Job* viii. 9.

[c] 1 *Cor.* iii. 19. *The wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God.*

[d] 1 *Cor.* ii. 14. *The natural man receiveth not the things of the ſpirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know them becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.*

[e] 2 *Cor.* iii. 5.

[f] *Rom.* v. 19. *As by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners; ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous.* Pſ. li. 5. *Behold I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me.* See *Job* xv. 14, 15, 16. *Pſ.* cxliii. 2.

[g] *Iſ.* liii. 6. lxiv. 6. [h] *Rom.* vii. 17, 18, 19.

[i] *James* iii. 2. *Gal.* iii. 22. [k] *Luke* xviii. 13.

ESSAY VI.

On our condition in regard to GOD *in a ſtate of nature.*

THE human nature is corrupted according to the deſcription before given; the truth of which we all [a]feel in our breaſts. We cannot but be ſenſible of the [b]blindneſs of our underſtandings, eſpecially in the things that relate to GOD and eternity: we have frequent occaſion to lament the perverſeneſs of our wills, and the miſplacing of our affections, ſo that we chooſe not what tends to the glory of GOD, and our own true happineſs; we do not love the LORD our GOD with our whole heart; rather, our affections are fixed almoſt entirely on ſenſual things. We love the world and the things therein inſtead of GOD; we fear the diſpleaſure of man, more than the anger of the Almighty, and ſeek for happineſs in ſenſual enjoyments, not in the favour of the ever-living GOD.

And this corruption proceeds from a real taint contracted by original, and increaſed by perſonal ſin. [c]*Out of the* human *heart* unſanctified by divine grace, *proceed evil thoughts.* We are aſſured there is [d]*none that doth good, no not one*; and hence the [e]*ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin.* Now as holineſs, purity, and juſtice, are the undoubted attributes of GOD, we cannot in this corrupted ſtate have any claim to the divine favour. We are, as the words of truth de-

ſcribe us, [f] *enemies to God by our wicked deeds, and ſo alienated in our minds and affections from the life of God, as to be dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.*

Moreover ſin hath ſubjected us to the [g] avenging juſtice of God, who *will render to every man according to his deeds.* An immortal ſoul under the conſtant and unatoned diſpleaſure of his God, cannot be otherwiſe than eternally miſerable; ſo that [h] *the wages of ſin* is *eternal* as well as temporal death, as putting the ſinner at an eternal ſeparation from the fountain of life and happineſs. Where then ſhall man find an atonement to infinite juſtice offended? Alas! it *will coſt more to redeem a ſoul* than he can give, ſo *that he muſt let that alone for ever.*

Such is the true condition of our preſent corrupted nature. In ſuch a ſtate we are ſeparated from infinite goodneſs, purity, and holineſs, and the unhappy objects of God's diſpleaſure to all eternity.

But let not this awful truth hurry us into deſpair. Let it rather prompt us to humble ourſelves before the throne of God's infinite majeſty, confeſſing our own inability to procure our own ſalvation, and praying him to accept us by thoſe means which he has appointed.

ESSAY

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[a] *Rom.* vii. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!*

[b] *Eph.* iv. 18. *Having the underſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their hearts.*

[c] *Matt.* xv. 19. [d] *Pſ.* liij. 3. [e] *Gal.* iii. 22.

[f] *Col.* i. 21. *Eph.* ii. 1. [g] *John* iii. 36. *Rom.* ij. 3—8, 9. [h] *Rom.* vi. 23.

ESSAY VII.

On man's redemption promiſed, and compleated by JESUS CHRIST.

WE have taken a ſhort view of the nature of GOD, of the original ſtate in which man was created, and of the miſerable condition he is in by his own diſobedience. Let us proceed to conſider the infinite mercy of GOD in redeeming him out of this miſery.

The ſacred oracles reveal to us, [a]that GOD in his eternal councils before the world was, had provided a ranſom for men in caſe they fell from that innocence he ſhould create them in. The purport of this council was certainly this; [b]that in caſe of man's diſobedience, the divine juſtice would ſuffer itſelf to be appeaſed by the intervention of the *ſecond divine perſon*, who in the fulneſs of time taking upon him the human nature, ſhould in that nature perform the entire obedience required of man, and, tho' without ſin himſelf, ſhould ſubmit to death the puniſhment of ſin, and thereby pay a ranſom of infinite value for the ſons of men.——And that, in order to rectify the depravity of the human nature, contracted by ſuch fall, the *third divine perſon*, [c]the Holy Spirit, by his illumination, and influence on the hearts of men would ſanctify all thoſe who ſhould humbly accept the ranſom, and render them a holy people to GOD.

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This amazing inſtance of divine love was actually notified to man immediately after his fall. God in pronouncing the curſe on the ſerpent for ſeducing the woman, declares, [d] *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed; it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel:* that is, it ſhall deſtroy the power---the head of the ſerpent which is the devil; and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel, the inferior part, the humanity of this bleſſed ſeed. So that the purport of this promiſe was, that tho' now the devil the great adverſary of God and goodneſs had ſeemingly gained his point, in prevailing on man to join him in his rebellion, yet a time ſhould come, when One of the ſeed of this woman, whom he had ſeduced, ſhould deſtroy his power and utterly undo what he had done; tho' the devil ſhould be permitted to perſecute him in his human nature even to death. This primary promiſe of redemption was [e] renewed at various times to the holy men of old, who were taught to look forward to the day of *Chriſt*; [f] *who ſaw it* through faith, and *were glad:* [g] and the future ſacrifice of *Chriſt*'s body was in a very particular manner exhibited to the faith of *Abraham*'s poſterity, by the command of God to him to offer up his only ſon *Iſaac*.

In truth, that God's gracious purpoſe ſhould be made known to men, [h] a ſyſtem of religious worſhip was eſtabliſhed, with rites and ceremonies expreſſive of what the redeemer incarnate ſhould do and ſuffer: and [i] his prophets, whom he from time to time raiſed up among his people, were commiſſioned to declare the great bleſſings, which

which would attend the MESSIAH's coming; nay to point out the *very time* of his appearing. So that about the time of our ſaviour's incarnation, the *Jews* were in full expectation of their Meſſiah's appearance; and the [k]various perſons who about that time aſſumed that character are evident proofs that the notion of a *mighty deliverer* ſtill ſubſiſted among them. Their falſe gloſſes upon ſcripture, their captivity, and the circumſtance of their groaning under the *Roman* yoke, had indeed concurred to make them expect a mighty *temporal* deliverer, who ſhould reinſtate them in the great dignity of their fore-fathers; but yet their being univerſally poſſeſs'd with this expectation, was a proof that the prophecies relating to this great event, were univerſally acknowledg'd and believ'd, however wrong their opinion of the *mode* of it might be.

But the knowledge of the great promiſe of redemption was not confined to thoſe who were honoured with the name of GOD's peculiar people. As this promiſe was given to the firſt parents of mankind, it diffuſed itſelf through all their poſterity. An event ſo great in itſelf and ſo intereſting to man, could not be obliterated, and muſt ever be connected with the notion of a GOD. Accordingly the heathens, who, after the confuſion at *Babel*, had by degrees fallen from the true religion, and had formed to themſelves [l]*gods many and lords many*, and worſhipped all the hoſt of heaven, ſtill preſerved evident traces of the great reſtitution in their mythology. Their numerous troops of *inferior deities*, their *demi-gods*, and *heroes*, evidently referred to the

method

method of God's dealing with men by a *mediator*; and their fables rightly underſtood, point out their expectation of the deity's taking human nature upon him, and therein performing ſome great actions. The various intercourſes of their gods with men in human ſhape, the labours and exploits of the *ſons* of *Jupiter*, and their aſſumption into the number of their gods, carry with them ſuch ſtrong marks of the *original promiſe* handed down by tradition, that they can be ſuppoſed to proceed from no other ſource than the revelation of a redeemer to the firſt parents of mankind, and of the incarnation of the *ſon of God* in the fulneſs of time, the *God-man*, who after ſuffering in our nature, and therein performing the great work of man's redemption ſhould aſcend into heaven, and be ſeated on the right-hand of God.———The rites too practiſed in the worſhip of the gods of the nations, ſpeak the ſame truth. The ablutions, purifications, and luſtrations plainly declared the corruption of the human nature, and the neceſſity of its being cleanſed before it could be admitted into the preſence of the deity. And the univerſal uſe of expiatory ſacrifices, with ſufficient clearneſs expreſſes their expectation of an atonement to be made by blood.

How much ſoever the heathens may be ſuppoſed to have loſt the *application* of their fables and their rites to the true object, as indeed they had; yet it cannot be conſidered but as an extraordinary providence, that the *method of redemption* ſhould be ſo remarkably preſerved in the whole world; which without doubt paved the

the way for the truth when propoſed to them. [m] The coming of the eaſtern *Magi* to *Jeruſalem*, directed thither by the appearance of a ſtar, at the time of our ſaviour's birth, is a full demonſtration that the *Gentiles* had among them a tradition that ſome *great deliverer* ſhould ariſe out of *Judea*. But ſuppoſing we had not this remarkable teſtimony recorded in the ſcriptures; yet their own writings atteſt the ſame. The famous *fifth eclogue of Virgil*, wrote about this time, is a ſtanding argument in ſupport of this aſſertion. The renovation of all things upon the birth of a child the offſpring of the gods, founded on the prophecies of the *Cumæan Sybil*, and determined in the council of the fates, is there repreſented in ſo remarkable a manner, and in terms ſo conſonant to the prophetical words of the inſpired penmen, as to excite our admiration and ſurprize. The grand truth breaks forth from amidſt the clouds of pagan fable, with ſuch wonderful force, as to oblige us to confeſs the reality of a tradition concerning [n] *the deſire of all nations*, and to adore the goodneſs of GOD in preſerving ſome monuments of his promiſe amidſt the groſſeſt corruptions, and in preparing the way for the benighted heathens to receive the [o] *ſun of righteouſneſs when he ſhould ariſe with healing in his wings*.———Thus the attention of all mankind was in ſome degree engaged to the acknowledgment of GOD's goodneſs: in an eſpecial manner GOD's choſen people were called upon to look through the rites of their law, to the important truths couched under theſe ſhadows.

When the fulneſs of time came, that the gracious purpoſe of man's redemption was to be fully compleated, [p] the eternal *Word was made fleſh*, and took our nature upon him. This redeemer was named [q] JESUS, *becauſe he was to ſave his people from their ſins*; and was acknowledged the *Son of God* by an [r] audible voice from heaven, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear him.*——— [s] The humanity thus aſſumed by the divinity *God anointed with the Holy Ghoſt, and with power*. Thus *Jeſus* was declared to be the long-expected *Chriſt* or *Meſſiah*, and was [t] *approved of God by miracles and ſigns and wonders, which God did by him*; and by doing and ſuffering all that was predicted concerning the Meſſiah, proved himſelf the deſire of all nations, even that ſeed of the woman who was to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be bleſſed.

Thus the prophecies concerning the redeemer were fulfilled in the perſon of *Jeſus:* and the great work of man's redemption *reſolved on* in the divine councils, *revealed* to *Adam* immediately after his fall, *ſucceſſively opened* to the patriarchs and holy men of old, and *ſhadowed* out in the whole inſtitution of the jewiſh religion was fully compleated. [v] *Glory to God in the higheſt, on earth, peace, good-will towards men!* [w] *Bleſſing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that ſitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb for ever and ever.*

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REFERENCES in Ess. VII.

[a] *Ephes.* i. 3—10. 2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Tit.* i. 2.
[b] *Luke* i. 68, 69, and on. [c] *Joel* ii. 28.
[d] *Gen.* iii. 15. [e] *Gen.* xxii. 18, & alibi.
[f] *John* viii. 56. [g] *Gen.* xxiii. 1—14.
[h] *Gal.* iii. 24. [i] *Isa.* ii. 2, 3, 4.—iv.—vii. 14. *Jer.* xxiii. 5, 6. *Dan.* xii. 10, 11. [k] *Acts* v. 36, 37.
[l] 2 *Cor.* viii. 5. [m] *Matt.* iii. [n] *Hag.* ii. 7.
[o] *Mal.* iv. 2. [p] *John* ii. 24. [q] *Matt.* i. 21.
[r] *Matt.* iii. 17. *Luke* ix. 35. [s] *Acts* x. 38.
[t] *Acts* iii. 22.

ESSAY VIII.

On the nature of CHRIST, *that he is both* GOD *and Man.*

IT concerns us in a particular manner to be acquainted with the nature of our redeemer, that we may be ſenſible of the greatneſs of his love, of the value of his ſacrifice, and of our duty to him. All we can poſſibly know upon this ſubject muſt be derived from revelation, which informs us of the particulars following: viz. [a] *that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Now the WORD confeſſedly means the *ſecond divine perſon*, who aſſumed the character of the ſaviour of the world. We are aſſured——[b] *that by him all things were created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, all things were created by him, and for him:*———that *Chriſt* is the [c] *beloved ſon of God*, the [d] *brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon:*----[e] that *he and his father are one:*----[f] that *whatſoever the father doth, the ſon doth likewiſe:*----[g] that *he is the* FIRST *and the* LAST:----that before his incarnation [h] *he thought it no robbery to be equal with God:*----[i] and that GOD *was manifeſt in the fleſh.*

Theſe expreſſions evidently point out the *divine* nature of *Chriſt* our redeemer, and prove that [k] *God was in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf.* Accordingly, even whilſt in the fleſh, he by his own power [l] forgave ſins; [m] raiſed the dead

dead; [n]performed the works of God; [o]as God, ſaw into the hearts and knew the thoughts of men; and [p]declared himſelf the *way*, *the truth*, *and the life*. In the character of God, [q]all were to *honour the ſon*, *as they honour the father*; and the [r]apoſtles were commanded *to go and make diſciples among all nations baptizing them in the name of the* Father, *of the* Son, *and of the* Holy Ghost; and theſe apoſtles [s]prayed to him as God, bleſſed in his name, and expected grace, mercy, peace, and all ſpiritual bleſſings from him.

Theſe revelations in the *new* teſtament, are but renewed declarations of his divinity, long before revealed in the *old*. [t]The divine appearances to the patriarchs under the title of the Angel of God, or the Angel-Jehovah, [u]the *Shiloh* who was ſent for the redemption and ſupport of his people are generally thought to be exhibitions of the ſecond divine perſon. This we are ſure of, that the patriarchs to whom they were made, [w]paid divine worſhip to this angel, which, had he not been God, would have been impious; and according to the cuſtom of thoſe times, gave names to thoſe places, where theſe gracious interviews were vouchſafed, with a direct reference to God. Hence *Peni-el*, that is the Face of God, *Jehovah-jireh*, the Lord will ſee, *Jehovah-Shalom*, the Lord ſend peace, and the like. We may juſtly conclude too, that he was emphatically the God of *Iſrael*, under whoſe mediation and in reference to whom, the whole œconomy of the jewiſh religion, with all its typical rites and ordinances, was conſtituted: as he was the

ſpiritual

[x] *ſpiritual rock* that followed the anceſtors of this people in the wilderneſs of mount *Sinai*. Thus he is expreſsly ſtiled God by *David*. [y] *Unto the ſon, he ſaith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.* And again, *David* ſays, [z] *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, ſit thou at my right hand, [a] till I make thine enemies thy foot-ſtool.* And *Iſaiah* characterizes him, [b] EMMANUEL, God *with us*: [c] *the* MIGHTY GOD, *the* EVERLASTING FATHER, *the Prince of Peace.*

Theſe ſcriptures plainly declare the *divinity* of our LORD and ſaviour *Jeſus Chriſt*, and expoſe the abſurd notion of a ſubordinate created GOD: ſince GOD can be *but one*, and whoever has that title given him by the Holy Spirit, muſt be *true* and *very God.*

This divine perſon who thought it no robbery to be equal with GOD, [d] yet *made himſelf of no reputation, and took on him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men.* This eternal [e] *Word was made fleſh*, and *dwelt among us*: [f] *he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.* He was born of the [g] virgin *Mary* in the manner deſcribed by the ſacred hiſtorians, and ſo was eminently the *ſeed of the woman, who was to bruiſe the ſerpent's head.* After this he [h] *increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature* as a man; he was [i] hungry, [k] weary, [l] he wept, [m] was grieved and touched with the feeling of our infirmities; he converſed with men, he eat with them, he lived with them, and was in all reſpects, *ſin only excepted*, [n] *made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and compaſſionate high-prieſt, as being tempted himſelf, ſo able to ſuc-*

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cour thoſe that are tempted.———Theſe are undoubted proofs of *Chriſt's humanity.*

As God and man then united in one perſon, our redeemer *Jeſus* is [a] *He that ſhould come,* [o] *in whom all the nations of the earth were to be bleſſed* the *Chriſt* or *anointed of God. He is that* [p] *prophet that ſhould come into the world,* to bear witneſs of the truth; [q] *Chriſt Jeſus, the apoſtle and high-prieſt of our profeſſion;* the [r] *one mediator between God and man;* [s] *our advocate with the father, and the* [t] *author of eternal ſalvation to all that obey him.* He is that [u] *Lamb of God* without ſpot or blemiſh, *which taketh away the ſins of the world.* Moreover he is the great [w] *Judge of quick and dead,* [x] LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS.

Such is *Jeſus* the *Chriſt,* whom we adore as our ſovereign LORD GOD, our Redeemer. Let us humbly acknowledge his ſtupendous love, in thus emptying himſelf of his glory, and taking upon him human nature for our ſakes. Let us with grateful hearts adore him, who [y] *being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;* yet in mercy to man, *made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of man.* May *every tongue confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the father!*

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REFERENCES in Ess. VIII.

[a] *John* i. 1. [b] *John* i. 3. *Col.* i. 16. *Rev.* iv. 11.
[c] *Luke* ix. 35. [d] *Heb.* i. 3. [e] *John* x. 30.
[f] *John* v. 19. [g] *Rev.* i. 17. [h] *Phil.* ii. 6.
[i] 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. [k] 2 *Cor.* v. 19. [l] *Matt.* ix. 2.
[m] *Luke* vii. 14, 15. [n] *John* x. 37, 38.
[o] *Matt.* ix. 4.—xii. 25. [p] *John* xiv. 6. [q] *John* v. 23.
[r] *Matt.* xxviii. 19.
[s] *Acts* vii. 59. 1 *Tim.* i. 2. *Eph.* i. 2, 3. *Gal.* vi. 18.
[t] *Gen.* xvi. 7, and on.—xviii. 1, 2, 13, 17, 20, 22, 33.—xxxii. 24, and on. *Exod.* iii. 2. *Judg.* vi. 11.
[u] *Gen.* xlix. 10. [w] *Exod.* iii. 5. *Judg.* vi. 22, 23, 24.
[x] 1 *Cor.* x. 4. [y] *Pſ.* xlv. 6. *Heb.* i. 8. [z] *Pſ.* cx. 1.

[a] *Iſa.* vii. 14, compared with *Matt.* i. 23.
[b] *Iſa.* ix. 6. [c] *Phil.* ii. 7. [d] *John* i. 14.
[e] *Heb.* ii. 16. [f] *Matt.* i. 18, to the end.
[g] *Luke* ii. 52. [h] *Matt.* iv. 2. [i] *John* iv. 6.
[k] *John* xi. 35. [l] *Mar.* i. 41. *Matt.* ix. 36.
[m] *Heb.* ii. 17, 18. [n] *Matt.* xi. 3. [o] *Gen.* xxii. 18.
[p] *Deut.* xviii. 15. [q] *Heb.* iii. 1. [r] 1 *Tim.* ii. 5.
[s] 1 *John* ii. 1. [t] *Heb.* v. 9. [u] *John* i. 29.
[w] *Acts* x. 42. [x] *Rev.* xvii. 14. [y] *Phil.* ii. 6, 7—11.

ESSAY IX.

On the means whereby Chriſt *compleated our redemption.*

WE have ſeen that *Chriſt* is our redeemer, let us conſider farther by what means he hath compleated this redemption for us.

Man was deficient, as hath been ſhewn before, in performing the whole will of God, and ſo became ſubject to the penalties of divine juſtice. His ſubſtitute therefore was to do what man did not, namely to perform the whole will of God. [a] The prophet *Malachi* foretelling the coming of the Just One declared that *the law of truth ſhould be in his mouth, that he ſhould walk in peace and equity, and ſhould turn many away from iniquity.* Accordingly we find *Chriſt* declaring of himſelf [b] that he *came not to deſtroy the law, but to fulfil it*: and [c] that *he ſought not his own will, but the will of him that ſent him:* he did always thoſe things that pleaſed him. The hiſtory of *Jeſus* wrote under the inſpiration of the Holy Spirit, informs us that he was [d] *meek and lowly in heart, that* [e] *he did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth,* who *when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he ſuffered he threatened not, but committed himſelf to him who judgeth righteouſly.* That he [f] *went about doing good, and* [g] *did all things well,* [h] *leaving us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps.* And the ſame Holy Spirit hath declared, [i] that *he was*

ſuch an high-prieſt as became us, who is holy, harmleſs, undefiled, ſeparate from ſinners.

Jeſus having thus performed the whole will of God, was not ſubject to the penalties of diſobedience; yet he ſubmitted to death, and that in the moſt ignominious manner to ranſom mankind from the original curſe: after a life of benevolence and obedience to the divine will, the *man Chriſt Jeſus* was apprehended as a malefactor, and at the inſtigation of the enraged *Jews*, who were offended at his taking upon him the character of their Meſſiah, who, as they falſly imagined, would appear in all the pomp of temporal grandeur, was ſentenced by *Pilate* the *Roman* governor to be crucified, and on the croſs gave up his precious life an atonement for the ſins of all mankind. Out of his great love to us, [k] *he gave himſelf for us, an offering and ſacrifice to God for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour, and hath redeemed us to God through his blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation.* [m] Thus *Chriſt ſuffered for our ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God.* [n] *He himſelf bore our ſins in his own body on the tree, that we being dead unto ſin ſhould live unto righteouſneſs, by whoſe ſtripes we are healed*; and hereby he has [o] *redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us, that* [p] *he might reconcile us to God by his croſs.* Hence *Jeſus* is become the [q] *captain of our ſalvation* as [r] *having taſted death for every man, that through death he might deſtroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time ſubject to bondage.*

Chriſt

Chriſt thus *died for our ſins:* and in order to ſhew the remiſſion of the penalty, and to give men a proof of the real ſatisfaction paid and accepted for ſin, [s]he roſe from the dead on the third day after his crucifixion. *As he died for our ſins, ſo he* [t]*roſe again for our juſtification.* [u]God raiſed up the man *Chriſt Jeſus*, and *ſhewed him openly to witneſſes choſen before of God*, according to the tenor of the prophecies concurring to prove, [w]*That it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer, and to riſe from the dead the third day.*

After his reſurrection, and after converſing forty days with his diſciples, this ſame *Jeſus* who was crucified and was buried and who roſe again from the dead, [x] *aſcended* viſibly into heaven, before many ſpectators. He was again received into that glory he enjoyed before his incarnation, and ſeated at the right-hand of God. He is there our [y] *advocate* with the father, and [z] *is able to ſave to the uttermoſt, thoſe who come unto God through him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them.*

By theſe means *Jeſus* hath compleated our redemption: *viz.* by performing that law of righteouſneſs we originally failed in, and which by the corruption of our nature conſequent on ſuch diſobedience we are incapable of performing:—by giving his innocent life a ranſom for the ſins of men;——by riſing from the dead as a ſure proof of the acceptance of the ſatisfaction;——and by aſcending into heaven, and there pleading our cauſe and interceding for us at the throne of grace.

As *Jeſus* hath thus loved us, let us dedicate our lives to his ſervice, the beſt proof of our love to him. Let the life we now live in the fleſh be ſacred to him, who died and now intercedes for us. Let us imitate his example whilſt on earth, that we may live with him in everlaſting glory.

ESSAY

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[a] *Mal.* ii. 6. [b] *Matt.* v. 17. [c] *John* v. 30.
[d] *Matt.* xi. 29. [e] 1 *Pet.* ii. 22, 23. [f] *Acts* x. 38.
[g] *Mark* vii. 37 [h] 1 *Pet.* ii. 21. [i] *Heb.* vii. 26.
[k] *Eph.* v. 2. [l] *Rev.* v. 9. [m] 1 *Pet.* iii. 18.
[n] 1 *Pet.* ii. 24. [o] *Gal.* iii. 13. [p] *Eph.* ii. 16.
[q] *Heb.* ii. 10. [r] *Heb.* ii. 9,—14, 15.
[s] *Mat.* xxviii. *Mark* xvi. *John* xxi. [t] *Rom.* iv. 25.
[u] *Acts* x. 40, 41. [w] *Luke* xxiv. 45, 46.
[x] *Acts* i. 9 *Luke* xxiv. 51. [y] 1 *John* ii. 1.
[z] *Heb.* vii. 25.

ESSAY X.

On the relation CHRIST *bears to us, as king, prieſt, and prophet.*

CHRIST having thus obtained eternal redemption for us, is become our *king*, our *prieſt*, and our *prophet*.

[a] *Chriſt is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made ſubject unto him.* [b] *The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Chriſt, and he ſhall reign for ever and ever.* [c] *He is the head of the church, which is his body:* [d] his *kingdom is within us*; [e] he *rules* in our hearts: [f] he directs and guides his faithful ſervants: and at the [g] *name of Jeſus every knee ſhall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue ſhall confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord to the glory of God the father.* [h] He is *Lord of lords, and King of kings.*

Chriſt is alſo our *Prieſt* as having made an *atonement* for the ſins of the people, as *bearing our ſins in his own body on the croſs*, and thereby becoming *the propitiation for our ſins.*—He is repreſented as the [k] *high-prieſt of our profeſſion*, [l] *entering into the holy of holies*, and there preſenting his own blood as a propitiation for the ſins of thoſe who ſhall believe in and obey him. Thus offering his own body a ſacrifice once for all, he hath *for ever ſanctified thoſe that believe.*

Chriſt

Chriſt is likewiſe our [m] *Prophet* as declaring the whole will of God that ſent him; as ſhewing himſelf *the way, the truth, and the life*, and by his example as well as precepts teaching men the good and acceptable will of God. As he was the ETERNAL WORD of God, he intimately knew, and explicitly declared the will of God; and as [n] he *ſpake as never man ſpake*, [o] ſo *his words were the words of eternal truth*, and the words he ſpake, as well as the [p] works he did, proved *that he was in the father, and the father in him.*

Let us ſubmit then to the divine direction of our LORD and Maſter *Jeſus Chriſt*. Let us be obedient to his commands, and ſuffer him to rule in our hearts. Let no rebellious principle be cheriſhed within us; let us not ſet up other lords, our own fallen reaſon, our pride or our paſſions to rule over us: but let every thought of our hearts be ſubject to the King of kings; let him rule over us, and in us; and let his great example, and his holy precepts be our guide and direction, and let us ſubmit ourſelves to him who is our LORD and Governor.

Let us accept the atonement he hath made for us, and look up to him as the alone ſacrifice for ſin, as the lamb without ſpot or blemiſh, who was to take away the ſins of the people. Let our eye of faith be fixed upon the great propitiation he hath made for us; and let us with holy boldneſs, tempered with profound humility, [q] *waſh in that fountain which is opened for ſin and for uncleanneſs*; let us waſh and be clean,

clean, as being purified by the blood of the God-man; as redeemed thereby from the curſe of the law.

Let us acknowledge *Jeſus* the great teacher of mankind, that prophet who was to come into the world, to teach the way of God in truth. Let us ſubmit then to be taught of God; let his word be our direction, and his promiſes our comfort. Then may we ſafely paſs through this tranſitory world, as having Jesus for our *King*, our *Prieſt*, and our *Prophet*, who will reward his faithful ſervants, who will waſh them from all their ſins, and preſent them unto God, *a holy people*, meet for the enjoyment of heaven.

ESSAY

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[a] 1 *Pet.* iii. 22. [b] *Rev.* xi. 15. [c] *Eph.* i. 23.—v. 23. [d] *Luke* xvii. 21. [e] *Col.* iii. 5. [f] 1 *Theſ.* iii. 11. 2 *Theſ.* iii. 5. [g] *Phil.* ii. 10. compared with *Iſa.* xlv. 23. [h] *Rev.* xvii. 14. [i] *Rom.* v. 11.—iii. 25. 1 *John* ii. 2. [k] *Heb.* iii. 1. [l] *Heb.* ix. 11, 12. [m] *John* vi. 14. *John* iv. 19. *Acts* iii. 23. compared with *Deut.* xviii. 15. *John* xiv. 6. [n] *John* vii. 46. [o] *John* i. 17.—xvii. 14-17. [p] *John* x. 37, 38. [q] *Zech.* xiii. 1.

ESSAY XI.

On the office of the Holy Ghoſt.

THE ETERNAL SPIRIT of GOD, by whom he [a] ſpake in his holy prophets, immediately after *Chriſt*'s aſcenſion declared his office in the redemption of mankind, by [b] *coming down upon the apoſtles in cloven tongues as of fire:* and the ſame ſpirit ſtill continues to declare it by his ordinary operations on the hearts of men, by, "putting into their minds good deſires, "and enabling them to bring the ſame to good "effect."

By his extraordinary gifts to the firſt preachers of the goſpel they were enabled to ſpeak [c] languages they had never learned; [d] to work miracles; and utter prophecies, ſo as to convince a prejudiced world, that *Chriſt* alone was the way, the truth, and the life. Hence the converſion of the world, miraculous indeed to human thought, was effected by the mighty power of GOD, in ſuch a manner, and in ſo ſhort a ſpace of time, not only without any human aid, but when all the powers of hell and earth were ſet up in avowed oppoſition to it, as cannot but make us ſee and adore the hand of GOD.

The extraordinary gifts of the ſpirit are ceaſed, as not being neceſſary for the ſupport of the church fully eſtabliſhed. But the ordinary ones ſtill remain the glorious privilege of the children of GOD. By theſe we are [e] *regenerated* in our

our baptiſm; and we that were eſtranged from God are brought near to him. If we ſincerely ſeek the divine aid, we ſhall *through the power of the Holy Ghoſt abound in hope, and be filled with all joy and peace in believing*; *and the* [z] *love of God will be ſhed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto us.* By theſe our [h] darken'd underſtandings will be enlightened; our ſtubborn wills rectified; our hearts renewed, and our affections called off from the creature to the Creator. By the ſpirit of God our fallen natures, deſtitute of the divine life, are [i] *born again unto a lively hope*; ſo that we ſhall become [k] *new creatures, old things being paſſed away, behold all things will become new.* The natural [l] *wind bloweth where it liſteth, and we hear the ſound thereof tho' we know not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth:* ſo the divine ſpirit by his gentle breathings and ſilent whiſpers will operate on our ſouls, and we ſhall feel the effect thereof, tho' we cannot tell the manner of his operation. Hence the [m] fruits of the ſpirit, *love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance,* manifeſt themſelves in the life of the regenerated chriſtian, and prove to himſelf, as well as to the world, a divine aſſiſtance oppoſing itſelf to, and greatly triumphing over the dictates and affections of corrupted nature.

Thus the Holy Spirit is the [n] *Sanctifier* of all thoſe who truly believe in *Jeſus*; whoſe [o] *ſouls are purified in obeying the truth through the ſpirit; who are ſaved by the waſhing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*; and being [p] *led by the ſpirit of God, they are become the ſons of God, and*

have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby they cry, Abba, Father.

Hereby the great purpoſe of man's redemption is compleated on the part of God. God hath not only accepted the ſatisfaction for the original apoſtacy, and perſonal tranſgreſſions of men, but hath given them a ſupernatural aid, to bring their hearts and affections to him, to purify and ſanctify them ſo entirely as to be fit for the enjoyment of his preſence, and the ſociety of the bleſſed in heaven.

Such and ſo great are the wonders of redeeming love! infinitely ſurpaſſing human thought, and capable of embracing every ſon and daughter of ſinning *Adam!* Glory be to the author of it! What words can expreſs, what praiſes can be ſufficient to ſhew our ſenſe of it? ——— Accept, all gracious Jehovah, our humble acknowlegement of thy mercies: deign to view us as clothed with the righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*: and may thy holy ſpirit ſo effectually promote a thorough converſion of our hearts to thee, that we may live entirely to thy glory, and be tranſformed into thy divine image, be poſſeſſed of that holineſs and righteouſneſs we were originally created in and deſigned for.

ESSAY

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[a] *Heb.* i. 1, 2. 2 *Pet.* i. 21. [b] *Acts* ii. 3, 4. [c] *Acts* ii. 4, 6. [d] *Acts* iii. 6, *& alibi.* [e] *Tit.* iii. 5. *Epheſ.* v. 26. *John* iii. 5. [f] *Rom.* xv. 13. [g] *Rom.* v. 5. [h] *Epheſ.* i. 17, 18. *Epheſ.* iv. 23. *Col.* iii 10. [i] 1 *Pet.* i. 3, 23. [k] 2 *Cor.* v. 17. [l] *John* iii. 8. [m] *Gal.* v. 22. [n] *Rom.* xv. 16. [o] 1 *Pet.* i. 22. [p] *Rom.* viii. 14, 15.

ESSAY XII.

On the inſtituted conditions of obtaining a part in this redemption.

SALVATION by *Chriſt* is undoubtedly the free [a] *gift of God.* We have nothing of ourſelves to recommend us to the divine favour. [b] As ſinners and rebels againſt God's authority, we muſt receive the forgiveneſs of our ſins as a free act of mercy.---But however free the gift is, yet God himſelf calls upon us to [c] *come* unto *Chriſt.* Our coming then can by no means make the gift leſs free. Nay, our being enjoined to come unto *Chriſt* makes it our duty to do ſo, and the *condition* on which the favour will be conferred. This is the meaning of a condition on our part, implying in it no merit of ours, only a ſubmiſſion of our wills to the divine call and word.

Chriſt himſelf hath declared the conditions on which we may hope to obtain a part in the great redemption. [d] *This is life eternal,* ſays he, *to know thee the only true God, and Jeſus Chriſt whom thou haſt ſent.* And the great apoſtle of the *Gentiles* avows his integrity and faithfulneſs in the miniſtry committed to him, and that he had [e] *kept back nothing that was profitable* for chriſtians to know; in that he *teſtified both to the Jews and alſo to the Greeks, repentance towards*

God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Theſe conditions are in other places of ſcripture expreſſed by [f] *repenting and believing the goſpel*; and ſometimes ſimply by [g] *believing in the Lord Jeſus.* All which expreſſions undoubtedly mean the ſame thing, tho' varied according to the different perſons they were addreſſed to, and the different ſentiments of religion they were poſſeſſed of.---The true means of attaining eternal life then, which we can no otherwiſe obtain but by having part in the redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt*, is an acknowlegment of the only true God, ſuch as he hath revealed himſelf to us in his word, an humble confeſſion of ſin to him, and ſincere repentance for it, and faith in his ſon *Jeſus Chriſt* whom he hath ſent, and a full acceptance of the mercy of redemption wrought by him: in other words, faith in *Chriſt* as the great redeemer ſent by God, and performing what was in mercy determined on in the divine counſels for the ſalvation of man; and this [h] *faith working by love*, that is, productive of the love of God and man; which whoever is poſſeſſed of, is undoubtedly poſſeſſed of every grace which can poſſibly adorn the ſoul of man, and compleat the true character of a chriſtian.

However high we may think of the phyſician, we ſhall not apply to him, [i] if we believe ourſelves whole: however high our notions of *Chriſt* may be, we ſhall not apply to him as our ſaviour and redeemer, unleſs we are ſenſible that we are loſt without him; unleſs we know ourſelves under the power of ſatan, [k] who leads

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us *captive at his will.* When we are humbly ſenſible of our ſpiritual malady, we ſhall apply to the great phyſician for cure; we ſhall accept his gracious offers, as the only remedy for our diſtempered ſouls; we ſhall entirely rely on his abilities to relieve us, and gratefully acknowlege his goodneſs in doing ſo.

Chriſt our redeemer kindly invites us to partake of his goodneſs. [l] Like the affectionate father he meets the repenting prodigal, and preſſes him to return to his duty. It is our part not to refuſe his gracious invitation, but humbly acknowleging our rebellion and undutifulneſs to accept the offer he makes us, to ſuffer him to lead us to our father's houſe, and gratefully to receive the reconciliation held out to us.---Unleſs we thus come unto *Chriſt*, ſubmitting ourſelves entirely to his direction, and confiding fully in him as our only ſaviour, we cannot expect to be ſaved by him. For as ſure as that he will [m] *in no caſe caſt him out, who cometh unto him*, ſo ſurely he requires an humble believing heart as indiſpenſably neceſſary to obtain a part in his ranſom.

Let us then humbly, ſenſible of our undone ſtate by nature, come unto *Jeſus* and he will ſave us from our ſins: let us truſt him as the great phyſician of our ſouls; let us acknowlege the filthineſs of our hearts, and rely on him as our purifier; as he alone who can cover us from the wrath of a juſt God.

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REFERENCES in Ess. XII.

[a] *Hence our redemption by* Christ *is throughout the ſcripture termed grace; which is oppoſed to debt and merit.* Tit. ii. 11. — iii. 4, 5, 6, 7. *Rom.* iv. 16, *& alibi.* [b] *Gal.* iii. 22. *Luke* xviii. 13, 14. [c] *Matt.* xi. 28. [d] *John* xvii. 3. [e] *Acts* xx. 20, 21. [f] *Mark* i. 15. [g] *Acts* xvi. 31. [h] *Gal.* vi. 5. [i] *Matt.* ix. 12. [k] 2 *Tim.* ii. 26. [l] *Luke* xv. 11, *to the end.* [m] *John* vi. 37.

ESSAY

ESSAY XIII.

On the duties incumbent on thoſe who are thus redeemed.

THE ſcheme of man's redemption by *Jeſus Chriſt* can in no light be conſidered as giving a licenſe for ſin, or ſuggeſting a careleſs inattention to the will of GOD. The ſame ſcripture which reveals to us, and enforces the comfortable doctrine that we are redeemed by the blood of *Chriſt*, enjoins us to live as the redeemed of the Lord; [a] following after *whatſoever things are true, honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely and of good report*; [b] to *walk not after the fleſh, but after the ſpirit*; [c] to *follow peace with all men, and holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord:* and propoſes the [d] unſpotted example of *Chriſt* for our imitation.

The ſpirit of GOD by repreſenting us as [e] *new creatures*, ſhews us the neceſſity of having *new* hearts and *new* minds: and exhorts us to [f] *put off concerning the former converſation the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful luſts; to be renewed in the ſpirit of our mind; and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.* The new birth of grace effected by [g] the waſhing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, is a ſolemn call to, and a ſtrong obligation on all thoſe, who are partakers of it, [h] to *be dead indeed*

deed unto ſin, and alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Gratitude to God and love to our redeemer are aditional powerful motives to piety and virtue. [i] The great *purpoſe*, for which *the ſon of God* was *manifeſted, was that he might deſtroy the works of the devil*, and to [k] renew the image of God in our ſouls defaced by ſin; which image can never exiſt in the abſence of holineſs, and muſt ever ſuppoſe the true chriſtian endued with every grace that can adorn human nature. For he only loves, and is a true diſciple of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who keeps his commandments. Whoever has a true faith in *Chriſt* as his redeemer, is [l] *ſanctified by the Holy Spirit:* and that ſanctification is not a ſpeculative privilege, but a practical love of holineſs, and an attention to [m] *purify ourſelves even as God is pure.* It conſiſts in an univerſal willing obedience to the commands of God, and the laws of man, ſo far as they are conſiſtent with the divine laws. This will dictate to us our duty of fulfilling every relation of life as in the preſence of God, of [n] *doing juſtly* and *loving mercy*, as well as of *walking humbly with God*, of diſcharging to the utmoſt of our power our duty to God, our neighbour, and ourſelves.

Chriſtian obedience then is the indiſpenſible duty of thoſe that are redeemed by *Chriſt*, and the genuine and neceſſary fruit of a ſaving faith; [o] *without it faith is dead.* Whoever truly believes in *Chriſt* is freed as from the penalty, ſo from the dominion of ſin. Whoever lives under the power of ſin, and gives no attention to attain

attain chriſtian holineſs, does not ſavingly believe in *Chriſt*, but either deceives himſelf, or endeavours to deceive others. For the religion of *Chriſt* promotes and enjoins the moſt perfect holineſs: and requires not only an external decency of behaviour, but an [p] inward ſanctification of the ſpirit. It extends to our thoughts as well as our actions, and when truly profeſſed [q] cleanſes the heart, the ſeat of our corrupt affections, from all impurity.

Moreover, the true chriſtian does not confine his views to himſelf, but is taught by his religion to promote the [r] public good. He thence knows, that the ſeveral ſubordinations among men are appointed by infinite wiſdom, and therefore muſt be ſubmitted to by man; that [s] *the powers that be are ordained of God*, and ſo that the civil ruler is *the miniſter of God to him for good*, [t] *ſent by him for the puniſhment of evil doers, and for the praiſe of them that do well: and that he muſt needs be ſubject not only for wrath but alſo for conſcience-ſake.* He is enjoined to [u] *honour all men, to love the brotherhood, to fear God, and honour the king.*----Every humane and every ſocial virtue proceeds from that great [w] diſtinguiſhing duty of the goſpel, an unfeigned love to his brother. This effectually kills in him the turbulent paſſions of envy, rancour, and malice, and promotes an univerſal benevolence in his ſoul. Hence he kindly compaſſionates, and generouſly relieves the diſtreſſes of his brethren: he nobly forgives the injuries offered him: and has his mind actuated by ſuch an heroic ſpirit of charity, as, after [x] the example

ample of his bleſſed maſter, [y] to *bleſs them that curſe him, to do good to them that hate him, and to pray for thoſe that deſpitefully uſe him and perſecute him.*

As he is too humble to think himſelf infallible, ſo he can eaſily pity the follies and excuſe the errors of thoſe he converſes with. That comprehenſive charity which poſſeſſes his ſoul excites him to *follow peace with all men*, and to live in harmony with thoſe who may differ from him in opinion. But, though he abhors perſecution for religion, yet when the *fundamentals* of his holy faith are attacked or denied, he will, with a becoming *zeal* tempered with *chriſtian meekneſs*, reſolutely oppoſe all gainſayers, vindicate the honour of his ſaviour, [z] boldly confeſs his maſter before men, and be ready, if occaſion requires, to give up his life as a teſtimony of his love to GOD, and of the ſincerity of his profeſſion.

Whoever is not thus prepared, and reſolved to ſacrifice every thing to the honour of his ſaviour: whoever is not actually engaged in bringing every thought and every imagination in ſubjection to the will of GOD; and does not [a] *ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom:* whoever does not think it his indiſpenſable duty to fulfil every relation of life with integrity and diligence; or vainly imagines, that a conſtant engagement in what he calls pious exerciſes, will excuſe him from the relative duties of life, from being a good ſubject, a dutiful child, a kind neighbour, or a careful parent; unhappily miſtakes his mark, and

and comes under the ſevere reproof our bleſſed Saviour gave to the ſcribes and phariſees; [b] *wo unto you ſcribes and phariſees, hypocrites, for ye pay tithe of mint and aniſe and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy and faith: theſe ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

For chriſtian holineſs, which conſiſts in [c] *having a conſcience void of offence towards man as well as God*, muſt ever be inſeparably connected with chriſtian faith as neceſſary to ſalvation; ſince the great view of the chriſtian diſpenſation is to [d] *teach us, that denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world; looking for that bleſſed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, who gave himſelf for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people zealous of good works.*

Such are the duties incumbent on chriſtians! Let us remember that a true chriſtian is one, who is alive unto God by good works; and whoſe heart is fixed on heavenly things, on thoſe graces and virtues, which are the employment of the bleſſed in heaven.

May theſe things be ſtrongly impreſſed by God's holy ſpirit on our minds! and may we all, who hope for redemption by *Chriſt*, prove ourſelves his peculiar people, by being zealous of good works!

REFERENCES in Ess. XIII.

[a] *Phil.* iv. 8. [b] *Rom.* viii. 1. *Gal.* v. 16. [c] *Heb.* xii. 14. [d] *Matt.* xi. 29. *Phil.* ii. 5. 1 *Pet.* ii. 21. [e] 2 *Cor.* v. 17. [f] *Epheſ.* iv. 22, 23, 24. [g] *Tit.* iii. 5. [h] *Rom.* vi. 11. [i] 1 *John* iii. 8. [k] *Col.* iii. 10. *Epheſ.* iv. 23. [l] *Rom.* xv. 16. [m] 1 *John* iii. 3. *Matt.* v. 48. [n] *Micah.* v. 8. [o] *James* ii. 26. [p] 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 3. *John* iv. 24. 2 *Cor.* x. 5. [q] *Rom.* ii. 29. *Matt.* v. 8. 1 *Pet.* iii. 4. [r] 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4, 5, 6, 7. *John* xiii. 35. [s] *Rom.* xiii. 1, 4, 5. [t] 1 *Pet.* ii. 14. [u] 1 *Pet.* ii. 17. [w] *John* xiii. 35. [x] *Luke* xxiii. 34. [y] *Matt.* v. 44. [z] *Matt.* x. 32.

[a] *James* iii. 13. [b] *Matt.* xxiii. 23. [c] *Acts* xxiv. 16. [d] *Tit.* ii. 12, 13, 14.

ESSAY

ESSAY XIV.

On the ſuperior excellence of the chriſtian over heathen morality.

THE morality taught in the goſpel of *Chriſt*, and enjoined to all chriſtians as the neceſſary teſt of the ſincerity of their profeſſion is truly perfect and excellent; extending itſelf not only to outward actions but to the moſt ſecret thoughts, and engaging the heart and affections to the purſuit of real holineſs; [a] *caſting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Chriſt.* Chriſtianity in reſpect of the purity of it's morals, as well as the efficacy of it's doctrines, tends to make the true profeſſor of it a [b] *new creature.*

Hence the [c] *fruit of the ſpirit*, or that fruit which is produced by the operation of the holy ſpirit in the heart of the true believer is *love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs, temperance.* Theſe are the genuine effects of a true faith in *Chriſt*, and theſe comprehend ſuch a ſyſtem of exalted morality, as tends to make the perſon poſſeſſed of them, like the uncreated fountain of all goodneſs; to be [d] *perfect as his father, who is in heaven, is perfect.*

A morality this vaſtly ſuperior to what was ever inculcated in the writings of the *philoſophers,*

phers, or thought neceſſary to be practiſed by the moſt virtuous heathens! Who among them ever thought *chaſtity* a virtue neceſſary to recommend them to the divine favour? Indeed the rites of ſome of their deities allowed of and ſanctified the moſt ſhameleſs proſtitutions. But chriſtians are commanded to be chaſte, for a reaſon that carries with it the utmoſt weight, becauſe their [e] *bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghoſt.*——Where are *humility*, and an acknowledgment that they received their mental abilities, or their moral goodneſs from GOD inculcated in their writings? Rather they [f] plumed themſelves on their good qualities, and thought they had a right to boaſt of their virtues, as the effects of their own [g] proper powers. This made the *few* who were poſſeſſed of them haughty and ſupercilious, and puffed up with ſo high a conceit of themſelves, as to hold others in the utmoſt [h] contempt. But the chriſtian hath learnt to acknowledge, that there is nothing which *he has not* [i] *received*, and therefore *that all boaſting is excluded:* and that [k] *every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights:* and to be ſo ſenſible of his inability to merit any thing by his moſt perfect obedience, as to own himſelf an [l] *unprofitable ſervant.*——Where among their boaſted moraliſts are forgiveneſs of injuries and univerſal benevolence explained and enforced as neceſſary to form a perfect character? But theſe are the *diſtinguiſhing* duties of the *goſpel.* How nobly are chriſtians taught to triumph over the turbulent paſſions of corrupted nature, when they are taught

taught to [m] *bleſs thoſe that curſe them, to do good to them that hate them, and to pray for thoſe that deſpitefully uſe them and perſecute them!* What a generous and lovely temper is promoted by the duty of *univerſal benevolence!* Every man is conſidered as the chriſtian's [n] *neighbour*, and as ſuch entitled to the kind offices of humanity and friendſhip. [o] As *members of one body* chriſtians are enjoined to conſult the good of the whole, by promoting the intereſt of each individual; and this benevolence extends to the ſoul as well as the body, and wiſhes and advances the eternal intereſt of all mankind.—— Theſe duties will ever ſtand forth as *diſtinguiſhing* marks of the *excellence* of the *chriſtian morality*, and prove it ſuperior to the dictates of human philoſophy.

What tho' a few ſhining precepts of virtue may be culled out from the writings of the more ſevere philoſophers and ſatiriſts of the ancients, yet ſome *notorious* and *avowed practices* will remain an everlaſting reproach upon heathen morality. The *expoſing of infants*, tho' deſtructive of the tendereſt affections, and of the moſt pernicious conſequence to ſociety, practiſed in the politeſt and moſt civilized ſtates, and in the height of human ſcience: and *ſelf-murder* committed by the moſt virtuous heathens, not only uncondemned by the beſt ſages of antiquity, but gloried in as an act of heroic fortitude, are laſting monuments of the *defect* of human wiſdom and the imperfection of heathen ethics. Theſe, and numberleſs other deviations from the path of real virtue,

tue, afford a collateral proof to the deſcription of the heathen world given by St. *Paul.* [p] *As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do things which are not convenient: being filled with all unrighteouſneſs, fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs, maliciouſneſs; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whiſperers, backbiters, haters of God, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters, inventors of evil things, diſobedient to parents, without underſtanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgement of God, that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death, not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in thoſe that do them.*

The writings indeed of the later moraliſts among the heathens, in the decline of *Paganiſm*, ſeem not to be liable to theſe objections as much as the former. The reaſon is plain. They corrected their philoſophy by the ſcriptures which were then in their hands; and the purity of the chriſtian ethics was in ſome meaſure tranſplanted into the writings of thoſe, who were aſhamed of the blindneſs of their predeceſſors, and ſo *borrowed* from the word of God, what they *falſly aſcribed* to human wiſdom. Otherwiſe no ſufficient reaſon can be aſſigned, why their philoſophy was refined juſt at that period, in a degree ſo much above the reach of the greateſt geniuſes for ſo many ages before.——The ſame may be ſaid of the *delineations of the religion of nature* exhibited by our modern philoſophers, who have *injudiciouſly* aſcribed that to the deductions of reaſon, which is in truth the product

product of revelation. Their treating theſe ſubjects ſo clearly, is owing to the light they have received from the divine word; and *that* is improperly called the *religion of nature*, which owes it's original to a *ſupernatural revelation*. We can only know, how far reaſon *could go* upon theſe ſubjects, by obſerving how far it *did direct* thoſe who were unacquainted with revelation: and the writings of thoſe can *only* be admitted as *proof* in this caſe, who knew no help but that of their own reaſon, directed by the dim light of a corrupted tradition. And whoever is converſant in theſe writings muſt obſerve the groſſeſt ignorance, and the moſt flagrant errors in matters of religion, and the utmoſt defect in the ſyſtems of their beſt moraliſts, productive of the moſt ſcandalous immoralities in practice.

Let us add this too to the excellence of chriſtian morality, that it is propoſed as practicable by a moſt perfect example. The life and actions of the GREAT REDEEMER, when inveſted with human nature, are a pattern for his followers to walk by. He himſelf practiſed what he taught, and gave to men an unſpotted example of every thing lovely and holy. The contrary to all which is true of the heathen philoſophers. They ſpake but did not. After all their fine ſpeeches in the praiſe of virtue, many of them were enſlaved to the moſt ſcandalous vices; and ſufficiently declared, that they were not ſo convinced of the truth of what they taught, as to think it neceſſary to regulate their own conduct by it.

Let us adore then the goodneſs of God, who hath given us ſuch an excellent rule, as to be able to direct us in the path that leadeth unto life. And let us [q] *walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.* Let our actions be regulated by the rules of the goſpel, and they will be lovely and praiſe-worthy. We ſhall then exhibit the genuine picture of true chriſtianity, when it is productive of a holy life, and ſhall ſo make [r] *our light to ſhine before men, that they may ſee our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.*

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[a] 2 *Cor.* x. 5. [b] 2 *Cor.* v. 17. [c] *Gal.* v. 22, 23. [d] *Matt.* v. 48 [e] 1 *Cor.* iii. 17. vi. 19. [f] Sume ſuperbiam quæſitam meritis.—*Hor. Carm. Lib.* 3. *Od.* 30. [g] Hæc ſatis eſt orare Jovem. Qui donat et aufert, Det vitam, det opes; æquum mî animum ipſe parabo.—*Hor. Epiſt. Lib.* 1. *Ep.* 18. *ad fin.* [h] Odi profanum vulgus & arceo. *Lib.* 3. *Od.* 1. [i] 1 *Cor.* iv. 7. *Rom.* iii. 27. [k] *James* i. 17. [l] *Luke* xvii. 10. [m] *Matt.* v. 44. [n] *Luke* x. 36. [o] *Rom.* xii. 4, 5. 1 *Cor.* xii. 26, 27. [p] *Rom.* i. 28, and on. [q] *Epheſ.* iv. 1. [r] *Matt.* v. 16.

ESSAY

ESSAY XV.

On the means of grace.

IN order to attain that ſanctification of the ſpirit and holineſs required of chriſtians, there are *certain means* appointed by the ſpirit of GOD whereby we are to gain a growth in grace and increaſe in chriſtian knowledge. The chief of theſe are the *ſacraments*, *reading of* GOD's *word*, *prayer*, and *meditation.* By the uſe of theſe means the ſoul as truly gains ſpiritual nouriſhment, as the body does proper ſupport by natural food, and as the latter for want of due ſuſtenance muſt neceſſarily grow faint, and languid, and at laſt conſume and die; ſo the former without the help of theſe means will grow inſenſible to divine things, and at laſt loſe it's union with GOD in which it's ſpiritual life conſiſts.

The "ſacraments are outward viſible ſigns "of inward and ſpiritual grace given unto us: "they were ordained by *Chriſt* himſelf as the "means whereby we receive the ſame grace, "and pledges to aſſure us thereof." The ſacraments are two, *Baptiſm*, and the *Lord's ſupper.*

I. *Baptiſm* is the ſacrament of our admiſſion into the church of *Chriſt*, and conveys to us the great privilege of being made members of *Chriſt*'s myſtical body, and of having a title to all the promiſes of GOD in *Chriſt*. This external

nal rite of being [a] *baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt*, expreſsly enjoined by *Chriſt* himſelf and [b] practiſed by his apoſtles, cannot without great preſumption and hazard be neglected, where there is an opportunity of it's being adminiſtred: inaſmuch as it is the ſign and the [c] medium of conveying that grace, whereby we are renewed in the ſpirit of our minds: and ſo neceſſary that our Saviour expreſsly declares, [d] *except a man be born of water and of the ſpirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of* God: and was thought of ſuch conſequence and indiſpenſible neceſſity by one of his apoſtles, that he ordered it to be adminiſtred even after the baptiſm of the ſpirit had been received. [e] *Then anſwered Peter; Can any man forbid water, that theſe ſhould not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghoſt, as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the* Lord.

II. The ſacrament of the Lord's *ſupper* ſolemnly inſtituted by Chriſt himſelf, is a [f] memorial of his death and ſufferings. By it we are called upon to renew in our minds a ſenſe of our redeemer's love to man and to praiſe him for the great mercy of redemption. As it is an inſtituted repreſentation of the great atonement made by *Chriſt*, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe it, when received in a faithful, humble, and thankful heart, to be the means of that atonement being applied to our ſouls. It is expreſsly called by an inſpired apoſtle, a *communion of the body and blood of* Chriſt; and ſo may truly be ſaid to be the great means of uniting us to him. And ſo indiſpenſible is our obligation

obligation to receive it frequently and ſeriouſly, that [h] *unleſs we eat the fleſh of the ſon of man, and drink his blood* (which we can no otherwiſe do, than in this ſacramental way) *we have no life in us.* And of ſuch great advantage was this to man, that that our bleſſed ſaviour declares, [i] *With deſire I have deſired to eat this paſſover with you before I ſuffer*; tho' this paſſover had nothing to diſtinguiſh it from others, but the ſubſequent inſtitution of the LORD's-ſupper.

III. In order to gain a true knowledge of GOD and his will, and a reliſh for ſpiritual things we muſt ſeriouſly and devoutly *read* his word. [k] For *faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of* GOD: We may be aſſured that an attentive reading of the ſcriptures is the true means of being acquainted with the will of GOD, and of acquiring a habit of being obedient to it, ſince [l] all *ſcripture is given by inſpiration of* GOD, *and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs, that the man of* GOD *may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good works.* Now what the Holy Spirit pronounces *profitable* or conducive, is certainly the *means appointed* to attain that end: And when our Saviour referred the *Jews* to the ſcriptures, ſaying [m] *ſearch the ſcriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life,* he ſtill lays the ſame injunction upon us as a means to attain the ſame end. Hence our Saviour after his reſurrection, declared to his diſciples the truth of his miſſion, and the neceſſity of his [n] *ſuffering thoſe things he did, and of his entering into glory, by opening their underſtandings that they might underſtand*

ſtand the ſcriptures; and beginning at Moſes and all the prophets he expounded unto them in all the ſcriptures the things concerning himſelf. Hence the *Bereans* are commended that *they* [o] *ſearched the ſcriptures daily, whether thoſe things* the apoſtles preached to them *were ſo:* and *Timothy* is put in mind *that from a child he had known the holy ſcriptures, which were able to make him wiſe unto ſalvation through faith which is in* Chriſt Jeſus. The divine truths by being frequently read will become familiar to us: [q] by them we ſhall be furniſhed with a fund of divine knowledge, and be enabled, according to the [r] example of our bleſſed Saviour, to anſwer the tempter in the words of truth, and to make him flee from us.

IV. To reading we muſt add fervent and conſtant *prayer*, another appointed means of drawing down the divine bleſſings. [s] *Aſk and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you.* By prayer we expreſs our dependence on God, and confidence in him as the only giver of all goodneſs, from whom [t] *every good and every perfect gift cometh.* It is this that puts the ſoul into a heavenly frame, raiſes it from the earth, and, as it were, carries it into the immediate preſence of it's God. It is this that ſpiritualizes our affections, and tends to inſpire us with that true temper of chriſtian piety, which at the ſame time that it is exerciſed in homage to the great God, extends its views to all mankind, and breathes a ſpirit of univerſal charity, by interceding for all at the throne of grace.

V. Our

V. Our ſpiritual life too will be greatly advanced by a devout *meditation* on the things of GOD, and theſe which concern our everlaſting ſalvation. Thus [u] Iſaac *went out to meditate in the field in the even-tide*; and *Joſhua* is commanded to [w] *meditate in the book of the law day and night*; and that man is termed [x] *bleſſed* by the royal Pſalmiſt, *whoſe delight is in the law of the* LORD, *and in his law doth meditate day and night.* And the ſame royal prophet profeſſes of himſelf [y] *I will meditate in thy precepts, and have reſpect unto thy ways*; and again, *mine eyes prevent the night-watches, that I might meditate on thy word.* Frequently to retire, and by a holy abſtraction of thought from earthly things to meditate on the things of eternity is the happy means of gaining a deadneſs to ſenſual things, and a lively ſenſe of religion. Meditation on the redeemer's love, and the gracious promiſes of GOD eternal in the heavens, will quicken us unto a lively ſenſe of our true and real intereſt, and make us active and couragious in the ſervice of our GOD and our Redeemer.

The divine bleſſing on the uſe of theſe and ſuch like means frequently invoked, and habitually deſired by us, will make them effectual to our ſanctification. By them we ſhall grow up to [z] *perfect men, unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of* Chriſt. Let it be our pleaſure then, as it our intereſt to be employed in them. [a] *So ſhall we be cleanſed from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of the* LORD.

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REFERENCES in Ess. XV.

[a] *Mat.* xxviii. 19. [b] *Acts* ii. 41. viii. 16, 38. xvi. 33. xxii. 16. [c] *Epheſ.* v. 26. *Tit.* iii. 5. [d] *John* iii. 5. [e] *Acts* x. 46, 47, 48. [f] 1 *Cor.* xi. 26. *Luke* xxii 19. [g] 1 *Cor.* x. 16. [h] *John* vi 58. [i] *Luke* xxii. 15. [k] *Rom.* x. 17. [l] 2 *Tim.* iii. 16. [m] *John* v. 39. [n] *Luke* xxiv. 26, 45, 27. [o] *Acts* xvii. 11. [p] 2 *Tim.* iii. 15. [q] *Pſa.* cxix. 97, 98, 99, 100. [r] *Mat.* iv. 4, 10. [s] *Mat.* vii. 7. [t] *James* i. 17. [u] *Gen.* xxiv 63. [w] *Joſhua* i. 8. [x] *Pſa.* i 2. [y] *Pſa* cxix. 15, *Pſa.* cxix. 48. [z] *Epheſ.* iv. 13. [a] 2 *Cor.* vii. 1.

ESSAY

ESSAY XVI.

On the promiſes of GOD *to chriſtian obedience, and the puniſhments denounced on impenitence.*

IT is certain that after all we can do, ſtill we are [a] *unprofitable ſervants:* we have done but that which was our duty to do, even ſuppoſing we performed a perfect and compleat obedience; and therefore can have no pretence for merit, no ground to expect a reward, unleſs from the unmerited favour and free promiſe of GOD. The promiſes of GOD to chriſtian obedience are of this nature, and the rewards annexed to a faithful diſcharge of duty, are by no means a debt due to any merit of ours, but the free gift of GOD in *Chriſt Jeſus.*

It hath pleaſed GOD out of his ſuperabundant goodneſs to promiſe [b] *eternal life to thoſe who fight the good fight of faith, and finiſh their courſe with joy.* [c] *To him that overcometh,* that is, to him who ſo attends and is obedient to the influences of divine grace, as thereby to be enabled to overcome the corruptions of his fallen nature, the wiles of the devil, and the ſnares of this world, and to live unto *Jeſus* that died for him; *to him* that thus *overcometh will I give,* ſaith GOD, *to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midſt of the paradiſe of* GOD: that is, he ſhall be a partaker of that divine life in heaven, the celeſtial paradiſe, of which the tree of life in

the earthly paradiſe was an inſtituted emblem, from which man was debarred by tranſgreſſion.

The ſpirit of God hath given us numerous aſſurances of the divine love to us, in giving us ſuch great and precious promiſes, to animate our endeavours, and to induce us to walk in *the way that leadeth unto life.* [d] Thus, *the gift of* God *is eternal life through* Jeſus Chriſt *our* Lord. [e] *A crown of glory that fadeth not away eternal in the heavens*, awaits thoſe who through the divine grace aſſiſting them, oppoſe, and by oppoſing at length ſubdue the enemies of their ſouls, the world, the fleſh, and the devil. A gracious [f] *welcome* and an entrance into his almighty *maſter's joy*, are ready for *the good and faithful ſervant*, who does his maſter's work on earth, and promotes his glory.

Theſe and numberleſs other expreſſions of the ſame kind point out a ſtate of never-ending happineſs, the ſure reward of our faith and patience; and are kindly held out to us by our all-merciful redeemer, as motives and encouragements to us to perſevere in every good word and work; [g] *to be ſtedfaſt and immoveable always abounding in the work of the* Lord, *foraſmuch as we know*, that is, we may depend upon the divine veracity, that *our labour will not be in vain in the* Lord.

On the other hand, how dreadful are the puniſhments denounced againſt thoſe, who either reject or do not improve under the gracious means of ſalvation offered them! [h] *He that believeth not ſhall be damned; ſince the wrath of* God *abideth on him*, in that ſtate of corrupt nature he

he chooſes to continue in. [i] *The wicked ſhall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget* God. [k] *Tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doth evil.* Our Saviour has ſolemnly declared the ſentence, that will be pronounced in the awful day of judgment on the ungodly profeſſors of his religion. [l] *Then will I profeſs unto them I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity.* [m] *Depart from me ye curſed into everlaſtiug fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* And [n] *theſe*, ſays he, *ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment*, [o] *where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched.* Threatnings, theſe, enough to make the ſtouteſt heart to tremble! images of diſtreſs and puniſhment ſufficient to convince us, that very dreadful indeed, irretrievably miſerable will be their ſtate, who *live without* God *in the world*, or who [p] *tread under foot the Son of* God, *and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and do deſpite unto the ſpirit of grace.*

Let us apply then the natural paſſions of hope and fear implanted in us by the God of nature to the nobleſt purpoſes they can poſſibly be applied, namely, to deter us from vice and excite us to the purſuit of holineſs: to animate our endeavours to walk in the way that leadeth unto life, and to rouze and quicken our apprehenſions of that miſery which will attend a wilful diſregard to the commands of an all-powerful and jealous God. May the goodneſs of God lead us to repentance, to a ſerious converſion of our hearts to him! and may his terrors awaken us from the ſleep of ſin! that being

wholly ſanctified both in body and ſoul, we may receive our divine maſter's approbation, and attain that ſtate of compleat happineſs he hath promiſed to his faithful ſervants.

ESSAY

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[a] *Luke* xvii. 10. [b] 1 *Tim.* vi. 12. [c] *Rev.* ii. 7. [d] *Rom.* vi. 23. [e] 1 *Pet.* v. 4. 2 *Cor.* iv. 17. v. 1. [f] *Mat.* xxv. 21. 34. [g] 1 *Cor.* xv. 58. [h] *Mark* xvi. 16. [i] *Pſa.* ix. 17. [k] *Rom.* ii. 9. [l] *Mat.* vii. 23. [m] *Mat.* xxv. 41. [n] *Mat.* xxv. 46. [o] *Mark* ix. 44. [p] *Rom.* x. 29.

ESSAY XVII.

On the great privileges of a chriſtian.

[a]MAN in a ſtate of corrupt nature is blind, weak and ſinful, averſe to ſpiritual things, an alien from GOD, on whom his happineſs depends, and ſubject to eternal puniſhment for his apoſtacy from GOD, and diſobedience to his laws.——— [b] Man by redemption hath his underſtanding informed in the moſt intereſting truths, his weakneſs aſſiſted by the powerful aid of GOD's holy ſpirit, and his affections changed and ſanctified by divine grace. He is no longer an *alien from God*, but the *adopted ſon of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, *an heir of God*, *and joint-heir with Chriſt*; and farther, his redeeming GOD, who is the *propitiation for his ſins*, is his *advocate with the father*, and pleads his own merits as a ſufficient reaſon for remitting the puniſhment due to man's tranſgreſſion; and moreover holds out to him a crown of never-ending happineſs, as a reward of his continuing *faithful unto the end*, and being *eſtabliſhed in every good word and work*.

The following texts of ſcripture very particularly deſcribe the high privileges of the regenerate chriſtian.—— [c] *Then ſpake Jeſus again unto them, ſaying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs, but ſhall have the light of life.*——— [d] *I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which*

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is given you by Jeſus Chriſt, that in every thing ye are enriched by him in all utterance, and in all knowledge.——[e] *The day-ſpring from on high hath viſited us to give light to them that ſit in darkneſs and in the ſhadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.*———[f] *And ſuch were ſome of you: but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified, but ye are juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit of our God.*——[g] *You that were ſometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and unblameable, and unreproveable in his ſight.*——[h] *Ye have not received the ſpirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the ſpirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The ſpirit itſelf beareth witneſs with our ſpirit, that we are the children of God; and if children then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Chriſt.*——[i] *For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil.*——[k] *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.*——[l] *As by the offence of one, judgement came upon all men to condemnation: even ſo by the righteouſneſs of one, the free gift came upon all men unto juſtification of life.*———[m] *Therefore being juſtified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*——[n] *The ſon of man came to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt.*——[o] *God ſo loved the world that he gave his only-begotten ſon, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh but have everlaſting life.*——[p] *Since by man came death, by man came alſo the reſurrection of the dead: for as*

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in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive.—[q] *O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory thro' our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*—[r] *But now being made free from ſin, and become ſervants to God, you have your fruit unto holineſs, and the end everlaſting life. For the wages of ſin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*—[s] *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God thro' faith unto ſalvation, ready to be revealed in the laſt time.*—[t] *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword? Nay, in all theſe things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am perſuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.*

Such is the deſcription given us by the unerring ſpirit of truth, of the bleſſed condition of the faithful chriſtian! So many are the high privileges of redemption above the miſery of corrupt nature!——Bleſſed God! grant that we may give all diligence to [u] *add to our faith virtue,*

tue, and to make this [w] *our great calling and election ſure.* [x] *What manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs*, who have ſuch great and precious promiſes laid before us. How circumſpect and watchful, leſt we again fall back into perdition, through the wiles of the devil, and the corruption of our own nature. [y] *For if we ſin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgement, and fiery indignation which ſhall devour the adverſaries.* But if we [z] *continue faithful unto death, Chriſt will give us a crown of life:* if we [a] *hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering,* [b] *looking unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith*, he will at the awful day of judgement welcome us into the kingdom of heaven, with the moſt raviſhing of all ſalutations, [c] *Come ye bleſſed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:* [d] *enter ye into the joy of your Lord.*

ESSAY

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[a] See Eſſays VI. and VII. [b] See the following texts of ſcripture. [c] *John* viii. 12. [d] 1 *Cor.* i. 4, 5. [e] *Luke* i. 78, 79. [f] 1 *Cor.* vi. 11. [g] *Col.* i. 21, 22. [h] *Rom.* viii. 15, 16, 17. [i] 1 *John* iii. 8. [k] *Epheſ.* i. 7. [l] *Rom.* v. 18. [m] *Rom.* v. 1. [n] *Luke* xix. 10. [o] *John* iii. 16. [p] 1 *Cor.* xv. 21, 22. [q] 1 *Cor.* xv. 55, 56, 57. [r] *Rom.* vi. 22, 23. [s] 1 *Pet.* i. 3, 4, 5. [t] *Rom.* x. 35, 37, 38, 39. [u] 2 *Pet.* i. 5. [w] 2 *Pet.* i. 10. [x] 2 *Pet.* iii. 11. [y] *Heb.* x. 26, 27. [z] *Rev.* ii. 10.

[a] *Heb.* x. 23. [b] *Heb.* xii. 2. [c] *Matt.* xxv. 34. [d] *Matt.* xxv. 21.

ESSAY XVIII.

On the holy Scriptures.

AS the truths and duties before explained are built on revelation, and are deduced from ſcripture, it will be highly proper to conſider the obligation man is under to ſubmit to what is revealed by GOD; and likewiſe to prove that the holy ſcriptures contain this revelation.

GOD originally formed man with a capacity of knowing and ſerving him. He gave him reaſon, not to find out by itſelf the truths of religion, but to underſtand and make uſe of them when revealed. All man's knowledge of ſpiritual things came firſt by information from GOD. GOD revealed himſelf to and converſed with man in Paradiſe, and thereby ſupplied him with proper ſubjects on which he might employ his reaſoning faculty. The truths revealed by GOD then are not to be tried by the teſt of human reaſon ſo far, as to be rejected if that cannot comprehend, or doth not approve of them: but human reaſon muſt take it's direction from, and be guided by revelation in this reſpect. When it does ſo, it is *right reaſon*, as being employed for the purpoſes it was deſigned for. When it exalts itſelf againſt the moſt high, and oppoſes itſelf to GOD, it muſt neceſſarily lead us, as it did *Adam*, into error, by preſuming to know good and evil contrary to revelation, and muſt be productive of the ſame dread-

ful conſequences. — It is abſurd then as well as impious for man to reject the truths of revelation, eſpecially ſuch as reſpect the divine nature and attributes, and God's dealings with man, merely becauſe he cannot fully comprehend them, or ſee the grounds of the divine proceedings, for this plain reaſon, *that it is impoſſible for a finite being to comprehend an infinite.* Man's duty is to examine the evidence, that the revelation is from God; and if that be ſatisfactory, implicitly to receive it as ſuch; and to ſeek to underſtand the revealed truths ſo far, and no farther than God hath thought fit to reveal them.—He will find proper and abundant employment for his reaſon in comparing, in admiring, in ſearching into, and in propagating the revealed truths. He may find a happy exerciſe of his reaſoning faculties in engaging his heart and affections to God, and employing them in his ſervice. This is his proper duty, and this will prove his final happineſs.

Now the ſcriptures of the old and new teſtament claim to themſelves the title of the *word of God.* It is of the utmoſt conſequence that we be convinced, that this claim is ſupported by truth, otherwiſe we ſhall not treat them as we ought. If they are what they claim to be, they demand our moſt attentive and reverential regard. And we ſhall gain conviction herein, if we employ our reaſon, where it may innocently and uſefully, and ought to be employed, in conſidering the following particulars.

—That they were written or dictated by men inſpired by the holy ſpirit of God, who gave incon-

inconteſtable proofs to thoſe they lived with, that they were inſpired, by *undoubted miracles* which they performed: and have proved themſelves ſuch to us by the exact *fulfilling of prophecies* which they uttered.

—That in particular the tranſactions recorded by *Moſes* were teſtified by a ritual of ſervices and ceremonies founded upon theſe tranſactions; which ritual was ſcrupulouſly obſerved, firſt by thoſe who were eye-witneſſes of theſe tranſactions, and religiouſly adhered to by their poſterity for ages: nay, which are now teſtified in a great degree by the preſent *Jews*; who, though diſperſed in great numbers thro' every nation under heaven, yet remain a diſtinct people unconnected with, and ſeparate from all; as *a ſtanding miracle* to prove the truth of thoſe writings which foretel this their wonderful diſperſion among and diſtinction from all other nations, until the *fulneſs of the Gentiles be come in.* And the facts relating to *Jeſus Chriſt* were ſo well known and atteſted, that numbers were thereby converted to chriſtianity, who tranſmitted the truth of theſe facts to their poſterity; to which facts the eſtabliſhment and diſcipline of the chriſtian church, in every ſucceſſive generation, have given a *conſtant* and *unſuſpected teſtimony.*——That the ſeveral writings of holy ſcripture, though penned by different perſons at diſtant periods of time, yet all go upon the ſame plan, all ſuppoſe the truth of and refer to the former ſcriptures. *Moſes* and the later prophets, tho' at ſome thouſand years diſtance of time, yet agree together and build upon the

ſame foundation: and the writers of the new teſtament refer to and ſuppoſe the truth of the facts recorded in the old; their grand deſign being to ſhew, that the predictions concerning the Meſſiah, contained in the prophetical writings of the old teſtament, were fulfilled in the perſon and ſufferings of *Jeſus*; and they take thoſe predictions as the foundation of their reaſoning on that ſubject. So that if the bible be an impoſture it muſt be carried on by a concurrence of perſons, and in a manner *ſo near to impoſſible*, that it is *abſurd* to mention the ſuppoſition: — And that the tendency of ſcripture in reſpect of it's hiſtory, it's precepts, and examples is ſo much adapted to promote true notions of GOD, ſo conſonant to the divine glory, and ſo agreeable to the nature and intereſts of man, that it is *really impoſſible* it ſhould proceed from any other than JEHOVAH, our *great* GOD, our *Creator*, *Redeemer*, and *Sanctifier*.

And leaſt any doubt ſhould ariſe, that poſſibly the ſcriptures we now have, may not be the ſame, which were originally written by the inſpired penmen, be pleaſed to conſider,——that they contain the ritual of ſervices inſtituted directly on thoſe great tranſactions recorded by *Moſes*, in the manner it was and ſtill is in a great meaſure obſerved by the *Jews*:—that the ſcriptures of the old teſtament were very early tranſlated into *Greek*, and thoſe of the new teſtament into every language almoſt under heaven:—that theſe tranſlations are *materially*, and to *all ſubſtantial purpoſes*, the ſame as the originals: — that thoſe nations, who received them, are

are ſo abſolutely unconnected with, and unknown to each other, that there can be no poſſibility of a combination between them:— and that numbers of important paſſages receive a collateral teſtimony from the quotations out of the ſcriptures, now extant in writers of every age both chriſtian and heathen.

It cannot be, but through want of a thorough knowledge of the original languages in thoſe who have from time to time tranſlated theſe ſcriptures, and of exactneſs in thoſe who have tranſcribed them, ſome errors muſt unavoidably have crept in: but they are ſuch as concern not any *fundamental doctrine or precept*. The ſeveral copies agree in the main, and correſpond with each other in every thing that relates to faith and practice, though they diſagree in ſome few *unimportant* particulars. Which various readings, though induſtriouſly collected and inſolently gloried in by thoſe who ſeek after every little argument to give a ſpecious pretext for their ſcepticiſm; or who are vain enough to imagine, that every petulant attack upon received opinions is a proof of their own ſuperior learning and abilities, yet are eaſily reconciled by ſound criticiſm; and as they concern only ſmall matters, are candidly overlooked by thoſe, who know that the ſeveral copies of the holy ſcriptures agree in the *general and neceſſary points of doctrine*; and who do not expect, as they have no right to expect, a ſtanding miracle to keep them uncorrupt in every the moſt minute particular, from the inattention and inaccuracy

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of thoſe who tranſcribe them, or the want of proper knowledge in thoſe who tranſlate them.

As the holy ſcriptures then carry with them ſuch undoubted marks of a divine original; as the authenticity of the preſent copies is as unqueſtionably proved, as the nature of the ſubject will admit; and as the various readings are ſuch as concern no doctrine or duty neceſſary to ſalvation, let us ſeriouſly attend to the obligations we are under to receive theſe ſcriptures as a ſufficient rule of faith and practice. Let us conſider them as the [a] *lively oracles of God*, containing the revelation of his will to us, and an unerring direction to us in running the race that is ſet before us. Theſe conſiderations, if they are ſuffered to have their due weight upon us, will induce us to ſet a due value on the ſacred records, and incline us to the diligent ſtudy of them.

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[a] *Gen.* ii. 16, 19. *Gen.* iii. 8, 9. [b] *Rom.* xi. 25. [c] *Acts* vii. 38.

THE CONCLUSION.

THE foregoing Eſſays exhibit to you, my dear boys, ſome of the fundamental truths contained in the holy ſcriptures, *in themſelves moſt important* and of *the higheſt concernment to man.* It is my earneſt deſire to have theſe truths deeply imprinted on your minds, becauſe they are the foundation of all true knowledge, and lead to everlaſting happineſs. By them you are acquainted with your true ſtate here, and ſupplied with the means of being happy to all eternity. They inform you what man originally was, what he is now, and what he may be; namely,—*a creature* deſigned for happineſs in the ſubjection of his will to the divine, and endowed by GOD with abilities to know, to adore, and to obey his almighty Creator: —*a creature*, who by oppoſing his will to GOD's, fell from his innocence, and conſequently from his happineſs; and was puniſhed with the corruption of his natural faculties, and ſubject to the penalty of GOD's diſpleaſure for the tranſgreſſion of his laws: which diſpleaſure, as it has an immortal ſoul for it's object, muſt make him eternally miſerable: —*a creature* redeemed from this miſery by the free offer of mercy in the ſon of GOD's love, promiſed immediately after the fall; who in the fulneſs of time

time taking human nature upon him, ſuffering therein, dying for our ſins, and riſing again for our juſtification, is thereby become the propitiation for the ſins of the whole world; and who has ſent his ſpirit into our hearts to ſanctify our corrupt affections and convert them to GOD; and who hath promiſed eternal life, to all who believe in and obey him as their Saviour, and continue in his love to the end of their lives.

Theſe truths are the ſubject of divine revelation, which claim your attention on the account of their *importance*, and demand your acceptance on the account of the *revealer of them*, the *mighty God and terrible*, all-wiſe, all-merciful, and all-powerful. Your reaſon, a moſt excellent gift, and by which you are diſtinguiſhed from the beaſts that periſh, muſt be ſubmitted to his direction who gave it; and your greateſt wiſdom will conſiſt in owning yourſelves obliged to receive inſtruction from him, who is infinite in wiſdom, and infinite in goodneſs to the children of men.

It is not to be ſuppoſed, that you have as yet fully conſidered theſe things. Your reaſon, which daily opens and diſcovers to you new truths, doubtleſs appears to you ſomething noble and glorious; and ſo it truly is: but do not flatter yourſelves that it is *all-ſufficient*, or that it can *of itſelf* lead you to the knowledge of truths by their nature infinitely above it's reach; or juſtify you in rejecting thoſe truths, *merely* becauſe you cannot ſee the propriety of them. As you advance in human ſcience, you will find your reaſon ſo often foiled as to oblige you

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to acknowledge it's imperfection: and when you apply it to the conſideration of divine things, you will experience it ſo entirely inadequate to the ſubjects, and ſo unfit to be your *ſole* director in theſe reſpects, that you will think, if you think rightly, your higheſt wiſdom to conſiſt in ſubmitting it to a divine guidance. Reaſon is a noble inſtrument in the hand of God, to enable you to underſtand what he thinks fit to reveal concerning himſelf, his attributes, and dealings with mankind: if once you take this inſtrument out of the directing hand of God, you will neceſſarily be led into error, and inſtead of truth be purſuing a deluſive phantom of your own imaginations. Reaſon is to the ſoul what the eye is to the body, the organ of viſion; but as the one cannot perform it's office without the natural, ſo neither can the other without the divine light. The caſe of the heathen world, and the many groſs miſtakes, which you have had an opportunity of obſerving in the courſe of your ſtudies, they were led into, may abundantly convince you, that human reaſon, deſtitute of divine direction, cannot bring men to the knowledge of the truth, cannot but lead them into error.

When you have once learnt to know yourſelves, and to be ſenſible of your own weakneſs, you will regard the ſcriptures as an *ineſtimable treaſure, the fountain of all uſeful knowledge, and the records of your eternal inheritance.* You will continually beg the divine aid, that you " may " ſo mark, learn and inwardly digeſt what is " contained in them, that by patience and com-

" fort of God's holy word, you may embrace " and ever hold faſt the bleſſed hope of everlaſt- " ing life which God hath given us by *Jeſus* " *Chriſt*."

Eſpecially the *chriſtian ſcholar* will think it very *unbecoming* to be verſed in heathen authors, and to apply his whole ſtudy in inveſtigating their beauties, whilſt the ſacred ſcriptures *the invaluable depoſit of all true wiſdom* lye neglected. He will conſider his learning as ſubſervient to the great end of making him more capable of underſtanding God's word. He will not content himſelf with *any ſtreams* let them be ever ſo pure, but will go to the *fountain head*, and will take ſome pains to enable him to read the ſcriptures in the *languages* in which they were written. And the profit and pleaſure he will reap from them will abundantly reward his labour. He will find them replete with the boldeſt figures, the moſt ſtriking images, and the moſt proper expreſſions beyond the power of any tranſlation fully to unfold. They will convey to his mind true notions of the ſtate of things in the natural world, as well as of God's moral dealings with mankind. He will find them throughout breathe a ſpirit of love to man, in inſtructing, in warning, in reproving, in encouraging him. In fine, they will ſo charm him with their ſimplicity, their conciſeneſs, and the expreſſive energy of their diction, deſigned to convey the moſt important truths to the mind of man in the moſt engaging, beautiful, and ſublime language, that he will feel them to be what in truth they are, the *words of eternal life*, and will

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think his ſtudies *never more properly* applied, than when he is employed in *ſearching the ſcriptures*, ſince they *alone will make him wiſe unto ſalvation*, and teach him to know that, which is above all things worthy to be known, *Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified.*

By this your cloſe attention to and ſtudy of the holy ſcriptures you will avoid two extremes equally dangerous, and productive of the moſt fatal conſequences, I mean, an *indifference in religion*, and a *faulty enthuſiaſm*. If you read your bible *ſeriouſly* you cannot be indifferent in religious matters, becauſe the truths recorded there will appear to you of ſuch *great concernment*, and come recommended to you by *ſo high an authority*, as to require your reception of them with all the faculties of your mind; and will excite in you a holy zeal to propagate them. You will thence know that God requires the *whole heart*, and that as *he is a ſpirit, he muſt be worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth:* therefore it will be impoſſible for thoſe who live under theſe perſuaſions to be *cool* in his ſervice, or to profeſs *an indifference* in regard either to the doctrines or duties revealed by him. On the other hand neither will you be lifted up above your brethren with the notion of *new revelations* and *particular favours* beſtowed upon yourſelves, which tend to make men think more *highly of themſelves than they ought to think*, and to deſpiſe others. You will perceive the ſufficiency of *the written word* to be ſuch as to preclude the *neceſſity of new revelations*; the *only* favour you will lay claim to will be that, which is *common* to all ſincere believers

who ſeek and aſk it, namely, the divine aſſiſtance of God's holy ſpirit, to *open your eyes that you may ſee the wondrous things of the divine laws*; and to incline and enable you ſo *to read as to underſtand*, and ſo to underſtand as to receive and practiſe the *words of eternal life*. You will find *humility* to be ſo much the great ſubject of God's word, and *that* inculcated in no reſpect more earneſtly than in regard to our own opinion of ourſelves, as effectually to kill in you ſpiritual pride, and a vain preference of yourſelves to others. You will have the *moſt lowly* opinion of yourſelves, and the *moſt favourable* of others, remembring that *you ſtand by grace*, and *therefore all boaſting is excluded*.———You will hence become *ſober*, *ſerious*, and *regular* chriſtians, devoutly uſing the means of grace appointed you, regularly obſerving thoſe inſtitutions the chriſtian church hath thought *neceſſary* to ſecure it's peace and welfare, and ſtedfaſtly adhering to God's word, as *the only lamp to your feet, and light unto your paths*.

You are advancing, my dear boys, to ripeneſs of underſtanding, and you are ſoon to go abroad from under my care, into the midſt of a thoughtleſs and giddy world, where vice and folly will undoubtedly attack you; I therefore thought it my duty to inform your minds in *theſe momentous particulars*, which may, by being preſſed home upon your hearts by the divine bleſſing, prove to you a defence againſt their attacks. I would not be thought to impoſe theſe upon you with the *authority of a maſter*, but to recommend to you with the *ſincerity of a friend*.

friend. Theſe eſſays then I beg you ſeriouſly to peruſe, and to keep by you, as *a ſtanding proof* of my tender regard to your preſent and future welfare; and which, I flatter myſelf, may be uſeful to you in the future part of your lives. However artleſs they may be in their conſtruction, they are the beſt teſtimony I can give of my good-will to you. In that light I deſire your acceptance of them, and pray the divine ſpirit to enlighten your minds with the knowledge of the important truths of which they treat, that they may prove to you ſome aſſiſtance againſt the temptations you muſt expect to meet with, and help to conduct you *in the way that leadeth unto life.*

E N D.

3 MAR 1915
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